BALLANTYNE

HELEN CAMPBELL

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BALLANTYNE

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A NOVEL

By HELEN CAMPBELL

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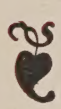

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To Paulina

Critic, Helper, and Friend
Well Beloved

THIS BOOK

BALLANTYNE

Book I

Chapter First

OF the ninety-three Americans who made the late March passage from Boston to Liverpool, in a year still recent, not one stepped upon English soil with so strong a sense of familiar proprietorship as Marion Lacy, Boston born, Boston bred, and with distinct and lifelong appreciation of her birthright and what it involved. Nantucket, it is true, claimed the father and Plymouth the mother; but Boston has always admitted that these two names stand for perhaps as valuable and coherent a background as her own, and yields deference accordingly, the three as one in inheritance and tradition.

To Marion it had meant always rather an embarrassment of riches, for the two old houses opened their doors every summer, each so full of attractions that choice seemed impossible. What could be more fascinating to a child, or for that matter to anybody, than the quaint houses of the old island, filled with strange spoils from many lands, presided over by gray-headed, almost barnacled, sea captains, who still went up daily to the "walks" built about

the cluster of chimneys on each roof of the roomy old dwellings, and swept the horizon for ships that long ago had made for other harbors?

Often Marion followed, lost in dreams of the dead and gone ancestors, matron and maid, who from the same "walks" had read every sign of wind and wave, and waited, as sailors' wives and sweethearts must, for many a ship that never came home. There they were now, all of them, in the little graveyard on the windy hill, where the curls so blew into her eyes that it was hard to spell out the names on the crumbling headstones, — chief among them that of old Peter Folger, surveyor, architect, school-master, lay-preacher, and poet, this last in such fashion only as Puritan limitations admitted.

In the bookcase in her grandfather's room, owned by his father before him, Marion had found the little volume, once famous, — the burst of manly, valiant, ungrammatical doggerel, "A Looking-Glass for the Times," in which the "plain speaker" sent out from the remote and mist-encircled island a voice whose plea for spiritual freedom still sounds clear and strong as many a voice that has followed. Standing in the big wooden chair to bring herself on a level with the shelf which held this and other treasures of the same order, the small Marion, with infinite trouble from the long s's, spelled out the verses, which fastened themselves in her memory, and which she repeated with the deep conviction that not Washington himself had quite the same claim to distinction.

"I am for peace and not for war,
And that 's the reason why
I write more plain than some men do,
That used to dawb and lie.
But I shall cease and set my name
To what I now insert.

"Because to be a libeller,
I hate with all my heart.
From Sherborn town where now I dwell,
My name I do put here,
Without offence, your real friend,
It is Peter Folger."

Grandfather had explained it carefully, never amazed at any form of question from this child, whose deep blue eyes held more questions than smiles, and who listened with grave consideration, nodding approval at the end.

"It means, then, that people should be allowed to think what they please and not be meddled with," she said, when the story ended; and Grandfather Lacy, quite unmindful of consequences, had said, "Certainly, child, certainly," and gone his way to the "Captain's Room" and his morning pipe with the old salts who met there daily to smoke and drink a quiet glass and tell strange tales of whaling days, as remote now as the Crusades or the search for the Golden Fleece.

Up by the old windmill Marion thought it all over, singing the quaint words to a tune of her own, and wondering how the rhymer looked and what people

said to him, and planning for more questions when the time came.

"I wish Peter Folger were alive now," she said next morning when alone with grandfather; "because he would understand, and he would n't be afraid to say he did."

Grandfather winced. His own subjection to Aunt Priscilla was plain.

"Are there any sons?" she went on. "Because if there are, when I am big enough I want to marry one of them."

"Sho!" said grandfather, hastily, stifling a chuckle. "That is n't the way for little girls to talk. Sons don't take after their fathers. It 's the mothers mostly that seem to have it their own way, and the men you hear about are not the sons of famous fathers. When your time comes, my pet, you 'll have to look out for somebody with a sensible mother. That 's where your great men lose their bearings and get on a sand-bar."

"Then I must look for Peter Folger's daughter's son," said Marion, after a pause for consideration. "Because it must be somebody that will understand, like you, grandfather, and that will not wonder all the time at things that are not wondering things at all. Does anybody ever let people alone, and let them do things, without saying, 'What makes you do so?' People always say, 'What does make you do so, Marion?' to me."

"That 's different," said Aunt Priscilla, who had

entered in time for these words, and who sent a look of reproof toward the old captain, who returned it with a certain defiance, but made haste to escape silently, long experience having taught him not to argue with Priscilla, who had reigned here undisputed quite forty years. But Marion waited for him when he came home, and took her place between his knees.

"The Pilgrims were only foreigners, you see," she went on, as if no break had come. "And Peter Folger was a Pilgrim, so he was a foreigner, too."

"What!" shouted Grandfather Lacy, with the voice of a trumpet. Marion started, but held her ground.

"I don't mean he landed on the Rock," she went on undaunted, while grandfather ruffled up his shock of white hair and looked at her speechless. "Because he did n't, you know. But you said he came over a while after, and so of course he was an Englishman, — and how could he turn into an American? I don't see why we 're not all foreigners, because you can't stop being what you were born, just because you go somewhere else."

"Great Scott! the child is arguing like a lawyer!" said grandfather under his breath, still looking at her with fascinated attention.

"Then we 're all English yet," pursued Marion, taking the look for agreement.

"English!" roared grandfather, coming to his senses. "When we went through two wars and buried our best, to get rid of English tyranny! When

the Pilgrims fled away to get to a spot where there might be free speech, and freedom to worship God, — and England persecuted every man that had a thought in his head! What do you mean, child? Don't you know that where you are born is your country, — and that you and four generations before you were born on American soil? Don't talk any more nonsense about being English."

"But we must be," persisted Marion. "Why can't I say that I 'm English, that got born over here, but that England is home?"

Grandfather gasped, struck his cane on the floor, rose up and then suddenly sat down again, a strange look coming over his face. For the moment he seemed to see his mother, her quiet face framed in the Quaker cap, and the same deep blue eyes that looked at him now under Marion's fair forehead fixed upon him, and heard her say: "Thee will come to it, my son, and some day thee will know that mankind is one brotherhood, and England or America, black or white, it is all the same."

"Go your way, child," he said at last. "It 's all the same in the end, I suppose; only don't you forget that this is your country, and your fathers died for it. I hope that 's not treason," he added, as he took down his hat. "What 's a man to do when he 's between two fires?"

It was fortunate that Aunt Priscilla called them to supper, looking suspiciously at both, since grandfather was hardly less a child than Marion. This had

always been her attitude. The oldest of seven, — Gardiner Lacy, the father of Marion, being the youngest, — it was quite natural that she should think of him in the same way, as a child with small capacity for dealing with the present mystery, also a child, but with strange, inexplicable ways.

There was no hint of her father's childhood in one point in Marion, since she preferred clean hands to dirty, and no matter where her expeditions led her, on land at least, came home unsoiled and untorn. There were two Marions evidently, one of whom rejoiced in a high wind and ran recklessly before it, singing scraps of all the poetry she had ever learned and dancing like mad in secret places, as the back of the barn or down in some hollow of the sheep-walks. This was the Marion who knew every odd corner in town, and had perched on the knees of every old captain, drinking in tales limitless in length and invention, or who, privately encouraged by grandfather, learned at six to row, and went out in bluefish boats, in any sort of weather, indifferent to the wash of waves or anything that wind or storm might bring. The other took silently all exhortations to better methods and such phases of discipline as seemed good to the much perplexed mind of Aunt Priscilla, who in the two months of summer labored to instil New England methods with a zeal bordering on fatuity, devoting the other ten to meditation on how finally to accomplish her end.

Marion's affection was given to her grandfather, to

whom she listened with a faith that warmed his soul; but Aunt Priscilla she had never loved, regarding her chiefly as an obstacle and making no further effort toward comprehension. In fact, womankind as a whole stood for obstruction. Nantucket began it; but Nantucket was, after all, a good deal under the jurisdiction of grandfather, who, whatever he might feel called upon to say, gave practically unconditional liberty.

This for June and July; but when they had ended, August and September were still to come, — and August and September meant Plymouth and the still old house where no child had ever played, and everything had been in the same place at least a hundred years.

Here dwelt Grandmother Barstow, tall and dark and silent, who had brought up Marion's mother in minute observance of the New England decalogue, and who could never be induced to follow her to Boston, or do more than make a yearly visit at the time of the May meetings. Plymouth contented her, nor could she see why desire should go beyond it; and thus she returned always after her month in Boston with a feeling of deep relief.

At home the day divided itself naturally; and Dilly, the old servant, brought up under her own teaching, conformed so far as the natural exuberance of the African temperament allowed, and regarded her position as of a dignity beyond the comprehension of any one not born in Plymouth. To Marion, in

her first years there, it was not quite plain whether Dilly herself had landed on Plymouth Rock or merely been there as guide and general counsellor when the Pilgrims appeared. The pewter platters of that first generation still stood on the dresser; the old sideboard held tankards as old; and the whole house, with its mingling of spoils from all countries, seemed made for story, and to promise a revelation from every corner.

It was Dilly who made life tolerable at Plymouth, since Grandmother Barstow had not only the theories of Aunt Priscilla, but much more power to carry them out; and Marion did her lessons and a stent of patchwork, deeply loathed but impossible to evade, before escape came to the old garden or the big barn. There were no children to play with — none, that is, within the range of Grandmother Barstow's theories, since there were neither young men nor maidens left, the West having swallowed them all. The doctor and the judge came once a week to play whist; the judge with a light-minded old wife who wore pink ribbons on her cap and a row of little curls on each side of her pretty old face, and on one never-to-be-forgotten afternoon, when Marion and her grandmother had been invited to tea, danced down the long parlor, to show Marion how she had opened the governor's ball with the governor himself, quite fifty years ago.

Here there was neither rowing nor running wild, since Grandmother Barstow followed every movement, and free action extended only to garden and

barn, with permission now and then for the shore, and no loophole for climbing on rocks or any search for shore treasures. Even her father had no power here, though to both Plymouth grandmother and Nantucket grandfather the same formula was written: "Leave Marion to herself in all ways where it does not conflict with submission to the general order of the house."

In this last clause lay the only loophole of retreat. The "general order," for Plymouth, was inflexible and covered all emergencies of life, and the work of the eight months of Boston license must also, as far as possible, be undone in the two in which her theories had no combatant save Marion's silent protest.

For Boston was a life no less distinct and apart from ordinary experience. Gardiner Lacy, after Harvard and the Law School were left, had gone into practice with an old friend of his father's, a silent and absorbed bachelor for whom the boy had been named, and who, dying a few years later, left him his fortune and an old house on Pinckney Street. Here the young man had gone at once, bringing there in time the delicate young wife, frail as one of the windflowers of her own Cape, her silent and repressed childhood having given no store of vitality for any later needs of living.

To her husband, absolutely content and with small knowledge of other women, her weakness seemed quite in the order of things; nor did he question, till brought face to face with the fact, that such strength

as she had had been spent in giving life to the baby, just old enough now to put out tiny arms and demand the attention, which he gave with a curious deference, as if already there were right to claim it. Nothing could avert the slow-coming death. For months he travelled with her, in vain search of health, bringing her back at last to the old house for which she longed steadily; and there, when Marion was barely two years old, she died.

From the beginning the baby had been and remained the charge of a vigorous young English nurse, who had already served her apprenticeship at home, and, brought up in the simple methods that give strength and sturdiness to English children, bade fair to escape any inherited evil tendencies. A housekeeper, also English, a woman in middle life, brought over by Mr. Lacy on one of his return trips from abroad, administered all household matters, and the home settled into fixed lines, the father dining alone, but having the child brought in with dessert, and falling at last into an almost undeviating routine.

With summer came the only break. Then, with a vague consciousness that his habits were very un-American, and must as far as necessary be counteracted, Marion was sent for two months each to the old houses; at first with her nurse, but on Aunt Priscilla's remonstrance, quite alone, that she might learn self-reliance. For himself, lest he should be tempted to interfere, he went abroad the last of June, and came home the last of September, having first seen Marion

safely settled at Nantucket, always with the promise that as soon as old enough she should go with him.

The same curious deference that had followed her babyhood remained part of her childhood also. They were companions, since, from the time she could lift the tea-pot, Marion in a high-chair presided at the breakfast table eating her own bowl of porridge and milk, with contented acceptance of the fact that grown-up people had things it was quite right to deny to children.

A student in many lines outside his profession, the father's home life was chiefly in the great library built out at the back of the house and lined with tall book-cases, where Marion had liberty to work her own will. A governess came three hours a day. There was no school, for he did not believe in the forcing system. Marion had her own table and chair in one corner, and sat there in the evening till bedtime, lost in her books, save at moments when she looked up to find her father's eye upon her, and exchanged the smile which testified to good fellowship. Sometimes he pushed away the book and stretched out his hand; and then she stood between his knees and told him of her day, and asked him grave questions about his; and sometimes, pacing up and down the room, the small Marion, with hands clasped like his behind her, kept by his side and listened to ballad or sonnet or whatever came to his mind, adding her own contribution and laying in great store to this end. At times other children were brought in, and of one or

two she grew fond; but her life was too apart from theirs, and the methods pursued in her own case too unlike ordinary ones, to make her desire much beyond the daily routine.

When spring came they rowed on the river,—down to which they looked from the bay-window of the drawing-room. They took long walks together, for each day had its allotted time in the open air. But the freedom of childhood had no place save at Nantucket. Here Marion revelled, and would joyfully have stayed the entire summer, but for the promise long ago made her mother, that time should be equally divided between the two houses.

Grandfather Lacy knew her better than anybody, better even than her father, whose silent subdued life brought out none of the wild eager strain that came to her with every breath of the great sea. In Boston she knew nobody save the decorous elderly cousins, who called at stated intervals and shook their heads at the way the child was growing up. It was in Nantucket that she first learned what human interests meant, and carried back the restlessness born of their lack, but not yet tangible enough to work any change in routine.

Plymouth and its inflexibilities came always between and stifled rising impulses; and when the two months were over, home seemed too delicious a relief to even think of question. But at Plymouth there were always Dilly's stories for resource, and something almost as fascinating in the great chimney,

which began in the cellar, a pile of masonry big enough to make an ordinary house, and pushed its way through the centre, narrowing as it went. Half the way up, on the second landing of the old stairway, a little door opened into it, just big enough for Marion's fair little head to enter and look far up to the patch of blue sky at the top and the darting swallows across the blue. There were nests all the way, one close to the opening, and she could look into the gaping mouths and hear the screaming mother above, answered by a chatter from every other mother all the way down. Best of all, something that never failed, was the bit of blue and the glancing flight across it, remembered long years later when, under the glorious dome of the Pantheon, on that square of pavement wet with the dew of a thousand years, she looked up to the same blue and the same swift flight. But even this at last palled, and a great weariness came upon her, and she even pondered running away, and getting back to Grandfather Lacy, since Grandmother Barstow grew more rigid every day, and the only break came in the two hours in which she walked through the old streets or down the shore road, dreaming dreams of free days to come.

Chapter Second

DOWN this road Marion walked one August afternoon, looking off to sea and a sail or two in the distance. The heat lay shimmering, a fine haze, bay and rock and sandy shore absorbing it as if to take in store against the coming winter. Masses of wild indigo were in bloom. Spikes of pink hardhack looked at her over the gray stone wall, and clumps of sweet-fern basking in the sun filled the air with their warm spiciness. Marion sat down by one of them and buried her face in it, then looked about at all the delicate greenery of an old New England roadside, fern and brake and moss; no sound anywhere, save the drone of a busy humble-bee in the clover, and beyond the light wash of the water, lying glassy calm under the afternoon sky, this beating pulse on the shore the only token of motion or life.

Down this road was the one interesting point, — a little unpainted weather-beaten house, with roof sloping to the ground and giving evidence of general decrepitude in hollowed ridge-pole and bulging side. Through the tiny panes of glass one saw only the yawning fireplace, the uneven floors and low ceiling,

from which the plaster had fallen in great pieces. Into these windows Marion had often looked, beginning a year or two before, when her afternoon walks had been admitted as something she might be trusted to take alone. At first it had been with a shiver, for strange shadows were in the corners, and it even seemed as if faces formed and disappeared and figures flitted before the low windows. Then, in spite of fear, came the wish to enter. There might be hidden treasure somewhere. There might be a hundred things that nobody knew about, — and why should not she, too, be a discoverer?

From the first frightened stealing in to the gradual sense of ownership was a long step — but it came. In the south room upstairs, a little table, a splint-bottomed chair, and a battered tin basin still remained; and here Marion labored, the dust of years flying before the stump of an old broom, and sand tugged up from the beach making a carpet at last. The little window came to the floor, and here she spread great store of sweet-fern, a spicy couch on which she lay and looked off to sea, dreaming dreams that came more freely here than in the sombre old house in the town. Such treasures as had no entrance there she put up here: gay stones and pebbles worn smooth by the sea; stray cockle-shells or wreaths of seaweed; an empty hornets' nest; some birds' eggs; anything that Dilly would reject or grandmother frown upon.

This was her own house. Here she ruled su-

preme, and in it moved a strange company, whose faces she saw and whose voices were plain, beginning with Peter Folger himself, making no protest now, but accepting as companions any one who came, from the King of the Golden River down to Red Riding-Hood herself.

It had been a shock, then, this afternoon, to find that her quarters had been invaded; that a fisherman's boat rocked near the shore, and a little dory was drawn up on the beach; while within, a woman moved about, and in the open doorway sat a little figure so twisted and distorted that Marion shuddered. She did not like deformity or dirt; but as the face turned toward her and she met the dark, wistful eyes fixed upon her, she came nearer involuntarily, and sat down on the old doorstep.

"Do you live here?" she asked. "I used to,— I mean a little every day. When did you come?"

"Not long ago," the child answered after a pause, in which he had looked steadily into Marion's face. "Father came because our house burned down and we had to come somewhere. He 's asleep now, but he goes out fishing, and so do Hiram and Hezekiah. They 're big. They 're my brothers. I 'm Zachariah, and I can't walk much. Did you ever have a house burn down?"

"Who 're you talking to?" said the woman, coming to the door, and looking distrustfully at Marion. "Mind what you say, now; and don't you be sassy to him."

"I don't want to be," said Marion, surprised. "I 'm so sorry for him. Can't he go anywhere?"

"Not unless he 's carried," said the woman, with a change of tone. "He crawls round here some, but he can't so well outdoors. He don't much mind, though, if I set him where he can look off."

"No," said Zachariah, with a smile that lighted the whole worn little face; "I take sights o' comfort just lookin'."

"He 's seven," said the woman, with a sigh, and in a burst of confidence she might not have felt toward an older listener added, "You 'd never think it to look at him. He don't look more 'n three in size. He hain't never had no chance. Zachariah, he fell out o' the second-story window when he was two, right onto the doorstep, an' he was so smashed they did n't think he could be set nohow, an' so he jest lay, an' the bones come together most anyway, an' he 's all of a twist, an' nothin' to be done unless you broke 'em an' started again. He 's crazy to go out in the boat, but he won't take him, an' the boys can't, because now they 've gone off to the Works over across the bay. I 'd take him, but for all I 've lived by the shore most all my life, I can't handle an oar no more 'n a baby; an' his father 's so set agin him an' everything he wants, I don't know how he 'll ever get his way. Not naterally set. Abner 's good naterally, but when he gets a leetle too much he 's set."

Marion's eyes fixed on her forlorn face had seemed

to compel these statements; and now she turned away. "Set a spell," she said. "It 'll please Zach."

Marion was looking toward the little dory. Here the inlet was smooth as glass, and she had rowed where real waves were rolling in on a far bolder shore. Grandmother Barstow and her injunctions receded into the distance.

"I can row," she said. "My grandfather taught me. I 'll row him all round the cove."

"Lawful heart!" said the woman. "I would n't durst to let you. You'd both be drowned."

"Help me with the boat," said Marion, "and I 'll show you;" and she ran, and began to push the dory. The woman followed, and after a moment pushed also. Marion sprang in and took the oars. It was delicious to feel them again, and she rowed with steady strokes across the inlet and back.

"Now," she said, as she ran the prow of the boat up on the shore again, "don't you see that I know? Can't I take him?"

"You do seem to," said the woman, hesitatingly; and Zachariah put out his two claws of hands with a silent imploring that went to Marion's heart.

"You must let him," she said, decisively. "I 'm ten years old, and my father wishes me to do what I want to do, — when it does n't — con — flict — " she added, slowly, with a sudden memory of the clause quoted by grandmother. "This does n't conflict, I know."

Without a word the woman brought out an old shawl and a pillow, arranged both in the bow of the boat, and carried the distorted little figure to it. Zachariah sat speechless with happiness, while Marion rowed gently and steadily, as if something precious were in charge. Back and forth across the inlet, and at last straight out to the mouth and the great rock, and a pause there while she looked at the crop of mussels and barnacles growing on it. Half an hour of this, — an ecstasy to Zach, and hardly less so to herself, — and then she suddenly became conscious that time was flying, and that she must go home.

"I shall come and do it again," she said, as Zach with shining eyes was put back in the doorway; and she hurried home, pondering whether she must tell grandmother.

"I shall tell father," she said at last. "Grandmother thinks everything is wicked. I won't tell her unless I have to."

So it came to pass that on the days when the dory lay idle and its master slept, Marion repeated the experience, and in any time between sat in the doorway and told stories or listened to Zach's theories of life. They were very simple. To be patient now, because by and by everybody was going to be good and he would not have to ache so much, and in the meantime to watch every inch of his small world, since each one had its story to tell.

"Everything has faces in it. Do you see faces?"

he said one day, his eyes fixed on Marion's. "Everything says things. Can you hear them?"

"Sometimes," Marion nodded. "I used to when I came down here all alone. Do you like it?"

"Of course. They 're my company. But I like you best of all. Don't go away."

"I must, I must," Marion said. "But I will come again; yes, I will come again."

So it was that the talk ended almost daily, at last with tears as the days were numbered, and the September wind ruffled the water of the little inlet, and Zach's mother shook her head mournfully as she looked at him. Daily Marion eyed her grandmother, wondering if she ought to tell before she went away. It was her first secret and one that weighed upon her, and she had even taken counsel with Dilly.

"Can a person do a thing because they think it is right and helps somebody else, even when some other person thinks it is wrong?" she asked; and Dilly, after a moment's observation, said:

"Law, child! Long 's nobody 's hurt, 't ain't nobody's business."

It was with these comforting words in her ears that Marion went down the shore road on a day later, now running, now walking,—a still bright day, hardly a white-cap to be seen, and an air that made her dance as she went. It is certain that grandmother, who had last seen her silent and subdued, eying her patchwork as an enemy to be disposed of at once, would not have known her. Dilly could

have told a different story; but Dilly was discreet, and only shook her head as she saw Marion's slow step quicken and her eyes lighten as she opened the old gate. Zach stretched out his arms as she ran at last toward him, and held her hand tight.

"We 'll have a beautiful row," she said; and that was all, till he was safely on his pillow, the great shawl wrapped around his chilly little body, and the silent passage to and fro had begun.

"A little farther, go a little farther," he begged at last. "We can go a little farther, because mother is gone over to the store, you know, and won't get back for a good while." And Marion nodded, and pulled toward the great rock. A bit of bright seaweed had been thrown up on it, and she tried to get it, making several efforts, since the tide was setting out and the current was strong about it. How it happened she could never tell; but as she bent over it at last and grasped it, one oar slipped away and floated just beyond her reach. She tried to draw it in with the other, and in the effort worked too absorbedly to notice that she was drifting farther out. Still it evaded her, and she looked up finally, startled to find where she was, and turning in sudden terror to the rock and shore. Zach's head had fallen back on the pillow. The sun shone warm on the haggard little face, and he had gone to sleep.

"I won't frighten him. It would frighten him if I called," Marion thought; "and there 's nobody to call;" and again she paddled with all her small strength,

quite conscious in the end that she was making no headway, and that the distance between her and the shore widened steadily. Wind and wave worked together. Her breath was quite gone. She stood up and looked about, but she was all alone, not even a distant sail within range.

"There is always something coming," she said. "I will watch." And she laid down the oar and sat quite silent, her eyes fixed on the far horizon line. Zach stirred presently and opened his eyes, surprised at a sudden sprinkle of spray from a wave.

"What a long way out," he said. "Why don't you go back?"

"I can't," said Marion with a little gasp, for one tear had fallen suddenly. "The oar is gone, and the tide is taking us out."

"Then we are going off together," said Zach, placidly. "I wished we could do it, and now we are, and we won't go back again."

"We can't till they pick us up," said Marion. "And there's nothing to do it."

"That's good," said Zach. "I'm not afraid, for I dreamed just now that something beautiful was pulling the boat right along; and it must be, for see how she goes — just a little rock, rock, and straight ahead. We're being taken somewhere, and it will be beautiful. Ain't you glad?"

Marion was silent, but she crept over next to Zach and watched the sun sink lower and lower, till at last sea and sky held only splendor, and their way lay

through waves of crimson and gold and amethyst; and then came twilight and fast-deepening shadow. Only a wave now and then broke against the boat, and Marion, who for a little while had cried quietly, her face turned from Zach, sat down in the bottom and wrapped the great shawl about both. She was not cold, for at the last moment Dilly had made her put on a warm jacket, and in the pocket were two doughnuts, one of which she gave to Zach.

"Lie down!" he said, presently. "Here's the pillow, and it 's so nice to rock and rock all the way to somewhere."

Marion obeyed, worn out with rowing and the long watching; and soon the two children slept soundly, while the dory rode easily over the light waves.

When Marion woke the stars were still shining, but in the east was a faint streak of light, the first token of coming day. She had been dreaming, and the dream still held her. Old Peter Folger was there, and he had said, "Don't you be frightened, child. I am taking you to your grandfather. He wanted you, and this seemed the only way."

The voice was so plain, the eyes looked at her with so much kindness, that she turned to see him better, and then remembered. She was stiff and chilled, and stood up; and then she saw that a little schooner was near, and that a boat with two men in it was pulling toward them.

"Great Jehosaphat!" one of them cried as he came

nearer. "It 's two children! For the land's sake, how did this happen?"

"Be very careful. He 's badly broken," said Marion, as one of them, a grizzled old sailor, caught the side of the dory and made a movement to lift the strange bundle on the pillow.

"It 's mermaids," the man said, as Zach sat up and looked at him calmly. "Where 'd you come from and where you bound to?"

"We 're bound to a beautiful place," said Zach. "Are you going there too?"

"Not unless Nantucket's your harbor," the old sailor answered after a pause of amazement. "It 'll take the captain to tackle your kind. He 'll get it out o' you better 'n I can, — an' now you 're to come in here."

He lifted Zach gently. Marion stepped over the side, and the little dory, tied to the larger boat, followed as they made great strokes toward the schooner, from the side of which two or three curious faces looked down. The children were handed up, and when a few questions had been asked and answered, Marion said:

"Can't you take us back to Plymouth? They will all be so frightened!"

"That mischief 's all done," said the captain. "We 're bound for Nantucket, an' we 'll be there by afternoon, — an' then I 'll telegraph. What your folks meant by letting you handle a boat, a snipe like you, beats me."

"They did n't," said Marion. "I mean they did.

My Grandfather Lacy at Nantucket showed me how, but my grandmother at Plymouth would n't let me, if she knew."

"So you 're the old captain's granddaughter, be you?" said the captain. "Well, well! We 'll have some breakfast, an' then we 'll hear the whole. They 'll have been cruisin' round for you the most of the night, most likely, — but there ain't no boats in sight. There, there," he added hastily, for Marion's eyes had filled with tears, which she winked away. "It 'll be all right when you git to grandfather's."

Marion's face cleared in spite of her remorse. To see grandfather again was a bliss worth purchasing by many sorrows; and to be on a real schooner and watching all its strange life was another delight far beyond her wildest dreams. Zach was her chief worry; but the telegraph would clear up everything, and in the meantime he was supremely happy. So the strange day wore away, and at sunset, after long hours of beating against a head wind, they dropped anchor in Nantucket harbor, and the captain himself carried Zach in his arms up the old street and to the house. Marion's heart failed her as she thought of Aunt Priscilla, but she went in quietly, showed the captain into the parlor, and then looked into the dining-room for her grandfather. His chair stood as usual before the secretary, but was empty, and she ran upstairs with a sudden frightened pause as Aunt Priscilla came out of her father's room, uttering a low cry as she faced her.

"How did you know?" she asked. "Who brought you? Can you be very quiet, Marion? He has never stopped wanting you, — but you 'll kill him if you cry or go on."

She pushed the child before her as she spoke, and opened the door. Marion was trembling as she went, and stood there dumb; for grandfather lay on his bed with closed eyes, breathing heavily.

"Sit down by him," said Aunt Priscilla. "He 'll know you as soon as he opens his eyes."

Know her? Why should he not know her? Marion sat down as she was bid and waited, touching at last the old hand that lay outside the coverlet, — the handsome hand that no seafaring had ever harmed, and that he admired quite impersonally, since it was the Lacy hand, the possession of generations. The veins were blue and swollen, but it seemed for all that almost lifeless, till her own warm little hand touched it. He stirred then and moaned a little, and slowly opened his eyes till they rested full on Marion's face. From what far-away distance they looked, till he had struggled back and put out his arms with the old smile!

"There she is," he said, slowly and with difficulty. "Just as I thought! Come up here, my pet, by grandfather, and we 'll have a little talk."

Marion had dropped her hat on the floor, and now she climbed up silently to the great old-fashioned bed, and nestled in his arms, her cheek against his.

"So they let you come, pet," he said presently,

with long pauses between the words. "I did n't know how they would manage it, since Gardiner is off. But I wanted you, and so they sent. I 'd no thought of you before to-morrow. You 're just in time, my pet, — just in time. Sails all furled and the anchor ready to drop."

What did he mean? His voice had failed again, and Aunt Priscilla came near and gave him some drops from a bottle on the stand, and then stood there quite still. The doctor had come in, too, and took his hand, and then laid it down silently.

"Let her alone," he said, as Aunt Priscilla made a motion to lift Marion down. "Let her alone. There is nothing now but that."

"Grandfather!" Marion cried in sudden terror, for he lay quite motionless, and one arm that had folded her had slipped away. "Oh, grandfather! What is it?"

"Come, pet, they are all there, and you shall go, too," he said suddenly, in a clear, full voice, lifting his head. Then it fell back, and all was still again; and when the silence had lasted a long time, and grew deeper and deeper, Marion, though she still clung, was aware that something strange and new had begun. But she did not stir till the old doctor, with tears streaming down his face, took her in his arms and said:

"Come, child! All you could do for him is done. He 's dead."

Chapter Third

THROUGH all her life, the days that followed seemed to Marion part of the dream begun in the little boat, as she floated on that night under the stars. Grandmother had come, and Dilly, and Zach's mother, but nobody reproached her. On the contrary, Dilly looked at her with a certain awe, as one just emerged from some land of mystery, and spoke to her in whispers. Most of them did that, and stole about on tiptoe; and even when they met at table the voices were muffled, as if there were some one who must not hear. Marion sat silently in corners, as she had learned to do with grandmother, only wishing that she might see Zach, who with his mother had been sent back on the next boat, crying vainly for another look, and hardly comforted by remembering of what wonders he had been a part.

Marion had seen grandfather once. They had put him in the coffin, and he lay there smiling and young, and certainly not the grandfather she had ever known. People came steadily, and the boat brought more, and at last on the fourth day there was a funeral in the old Quaker fashion, though all the ministers were

there. The old captains bore the coffin, and all the town followed in long lines through the crooked streets, and up the windy hill where she had played, and where they laid him in sight of the sea.

"Man is as grass and as the flower of the field," the Quaker preacher had broken out suddenly, in the strange, high-pitched voice, that seemed to have the sound of the wind in it, and that went on and on with its burden of man's frailty and the nothingness of earth.

"They said he would rise again, — but he can't in that awful box," Marion thought; and as the first shovelfuls of earth fell on the lid she cried:

"Grandfather! grandfather! Oh, take him out! You must n't leave him shut up so!"

She threw herself down by the grave, a passion of tears and sobs shaking her. Then some one lifted her, and her father's voice whispered, "Hush, Marion, — and soon I will tell you all about it;" and she clung to him silently till the grave was filled, and the people turned away, and, to the scandal of everybody, Gardiner Lacy, instead of going home, walked toward the old windmill with Marion in his arms. There he sat down and told her what she never forgot, — that people made death terrible because, no matter what they said, they did not believe that it was a great gift and not a curse.

"Live well. Think high thoughts. Be kind and loving and generous and fearless, like grandfather; and when the day comes that you must take your

turn, and lie with shut eyes till they put you out of sight, you will open them on something more beautiful than you ever dreamed, and it will be forever."

Never had he spoken such words before, nor did they come again. Marion held him tight, quiet and comforted, even jubilant at last, as one to whom a great good was to come. But though she ran down the hill, she grew silent again as they went into the house; for grandmother was there to tell the tale of her misdoing, and it was uncertain what might happen.

No clue came to her as to what had been said, nor did she see grandmother till supper time. And then every one listened to old Friend Barstow, as he finished a story begun on the porch, the beginning of which Marion resolved must be hers as soon as she could find him alone. It was the story of a wreck which had happened off the Irish coast, part of the work of a terrible storm, which her father said he had encountered also on the way home. In it, said the Friend, a far-away cousin had been lost with one of the two children — lost near shore, though as yet no details had come, and they only knew that the mother and one child were saved. He knew all the Ballantynes, and he shook his head as he ended.

"I hope it 's a John that 's come to land," he said. "There 's been a John Ballantyne in the family ever since the first Ballantyne set foot in America. It would be a pity if the old name ran out."

Marion listened with a shiver. This blue sea could be cruel, she knew, but to her it had always

been kind; nor could she understand the sudden passion with which her father caught her as he came out from another shorter talk with grandmother, holding her close as he said:

"God! To think of what might have happened!"

"Your father does not think as I do," grandmother said, severely, when she next saw Marion. "You have deceived me for a long time. I shall ask you no questions, because I do not wish to hear any falsehoods, but I certainly shall not trust you again, and it is my opinion you ought to be sent to a very strict school, where you would be watched all the time. That a merciful Providence interfered, and that you were brought here, makes no real difference. You have been a very wicked child, and that your father makes light of it is all the worse for you."

"I wanted to tell you, — I thought about it a good deal," said Marion, whose face had flushed hotly, and who was trembling a little. "It was for Zach, really. I mean I wanted to anyway, and you think everything is wicked, and I knew, — I knew that that was not;" and Marion, with a burst of tears, ran out of the room and hid herself in the garden between the rows of corn, till she heard her father's voice calling. The boat was there. They were all to go together; and as they sailed away toward Martha's Vineyard, from which long ago old Peter Folger had rowed across to the Nantucket shore, she looked at all and remembered, unconscious of the years that would pass before it met her eyes again.

Leaning over the side, she watched the furrow in the water, and tried not to think how it must seem to be struggling in these waves on which she had always ridden so lightly. But the faces of the two children seemed rising and falling with each one that broke against the boat; and she cried out at last, and ran to her father, who sat just inside the cabin door, talking with grandmother and the other people, who were all relations.

"The child will be sick. She's next door to it now!" one of them said; and Gardiner Lacy looked at her anxiously, and for a day or two afterward watched every movement.

Something must be done. It was quite plain that she had been too much with her elders; and at last he took counsel with the one cousin for whom he had always had a certain affection, — a woman of the world, but one who had loved his wife and been loved in return. To her belonged the three children, two girls and a boy, who came sometimes, but whom Marion had never visited in turn, and whom her father watched as if they were creatures of another planet, and not to be trusted save when his eyes were on them.

The consultation changed his plans entirely. Marion must work at home, but he decided that the three should study with her, share her one-o'clock dinner, and play for an hour or two after it was over, and before they left her to the silence of the great rooms, which each day thereafter grew noisier, since

the three took full possession, led always by Marion, who developed tendencies unsuspected by the decorous housekeeper, and made-believe all the day long. Everything, from ballad to page in history, turned into drama, the old dining-room a stage. She went to the block in a hundred characters. Now, Mary Queen of Scots, with piano-cover train, and Nell and Bess as Mary Seaton and Mary Beaton, weeping behind her, Tom marching solemnly before with the kitchen hatchet as axe. She was Madame Roland; she was Jeanne d'Arc; anything beautiful and unfortunate and evil-treated, though sometimes with sudden remorse at her own selfishness she renounced the chief part and followed one or the other. The chief part had even been given to Tom, who as Sir Walter Raleigh spread a small and dingy red cape as cloak under her queenly feet, or as Sir Philip Sidney, lay rigidly on his back and sternly motioned away the cup of water brought by Marion disguised as a soldier in her father's soft hat and an old-fashioned military cloak. There was a Mexican poncho that answered for Columbus when he came before Ferdinand and Isabella; and in time various properties accumulated, but with no less necessity for much make-believe.

So long as this lasted, all went well; but it was a different matter when they settled to talk, and Marion listened to heated discussions as to what they would do when they grew up; who ought to be visited; who were nice people, and who were not.

"You could be more exclusive than anybody,

mamma says," said Bess one day. "You have a right to be, because you are one of the oldest families; and when you are a young lady you can do as you choose and nobody will dare to say anything much, and the people in the North End and such places will be very envious and wish they could do so, too."

"Why should n't they?" said Marion, sitting down suddenly and looking attentively at Bess.

"Why, because they can't, you know. They 're common, you see. They don't live in the right places. When you 're fashionable, you live in the right places. You 've got to be kind to them, but you can't go to see them, because, don't you see? they 're not in society. That 's what mamma said when I wanted Eva Hopkins to come and see me, and then I found out her father had a grocery, and it would n't do, and I told her, and she cried first, and then she was mad and said she 'd show me some day she was as good as I was. Mamma said this was impossible, because there were always differences everywhere, and papa said the same, and that we must never play with promiscuous children, out of our own set, you know."

"Do you know what I shall do as soon as I am big?" said Marion, after a pause in which she had looked at the three children reflectively. "I shall get father to let me live half the time with the very poorest people I can find. Poor like Zach, I mean. Zach was n't common. Oh, no. He thought

about wonderful things that you don't know anything about. Oh, how I want to see him!"

Her eyes filled with tears. Summer was near, but she did not yet know what would be done, and in all these months there had been no word of Zach, save the one in answer to her father's letter, sent to them by grandmother, that she had found the house shut up and nobody there. Marion had not even told them of Zach. That last day and night were all a part of the mystery which she kept quite to herself, and now she answered no questions, but sat, silent and inscrutable, till they were gone.

"You were not polite," the housekeeper said; and Marion, with a dark look, replied:

"I never mean to be polite, when people say stupid things or mean things."

June came, and Marion saw her father's eyes fixed often upon her with a question she did not understand.

"If you were but a little older," he said one evening as she stood between his knees; "if you were just a little older, I would —"

He shut his lips tightly, nor could any question extract what he would do; but a day or two later he said:

"I want to take you with me, Marion, but I am afraid you are too small a girl."

Marion's eyes grew large, and the pink deepened in her cheeks. "Oh!" she cried, and stood breathless.

"There would have to be a maid," he went on, "and that would be troublesome."

"There won't have to be anybody," said Marion, with decision. "Didn't you have me go to grandfather's without anybody, just to learn, — and can't I button my own shoes, and everything? Take me, take me! I'll never be a bit of trouble, and I am big — see!"

Gardiner Lacy looked seriously at the little figure, stretched to its utmost, every curl alive with eagerness, and the deep blue eyes dark with excitement.

"I am growing up," she said. "I shall never be troublesome any more, and now I shall always go with you."

"Very well," her father said at last; and Marion in a silent ecstasy put her hands on each side of his face, and kissed him in her favorite fashion, on eyes and lips.

So it happened, with no more words, that the steamer's list read, "Gardiner Lacy and daughter," and that the old order gave way to the new, with only a little consternation on the part of the few objectors, and unlimited satisfaction for the two most nearly concerned. If in the first years there were strange lapses or combinations in Marion's raiment, there was small consciousness of it for either, and he learned at last to take her over with only her single travelling suit, and buy as was needed in the London shops, where they were soon known and established as favorites, since they wanted the best and took it without question as to price.

For a month each year they stayed in London with

a friend of her father's, whose interests outside his profession were chiefly Assyrian antiquities, and with whom Marion held grave discussions, standing at his side in the British Museum, and perplexing herself over the inscrutable yet light-minded grin of these representatives of Assyrian dynasties. But chiefest came the exploration of old London itself, which she grew to know inch by inch, her father's love for the story of the past making it alive again. English literature thus took on a meaning unknown to the colder student, and Marion with each year grew more and more into passionate sympathy with all on English soil, and replied with fervor to questions: "Oh, yes; I was born in America, but I am English, too!"

So Scotland, England, and at last bits of Ireland also came to be familiar ground, and the nine months of home were principally retrospect and expectation, with an added interest which was tolerated in spite of her Aunt Theodosia's opposition. Zach had gone quite out of her life; but he had left an open door through which all wandering and forlorn children found entrance. There were plenty of streets leading off the hill, in which tenement-houses rose and squalid children swarmed; and Marion brought them home in twos and threes, and washed and scrubbed and combed, till the real child, warmed and filled and made glad with stories, showed the face meant for it in the beginning.

"Let her alone," her father said to all complaints.

"When she does something wrong it will be time to interfere."

That he himself felt absolute helplessness in facing this order made no difference; Marion did not. She understood, and if no other result came, it was better than Aunt Theodosia's system, reduced to certain yearly subscriptions and eliminating the human element as successfully as most systems. Bess and Nell were in a fashionable school, and Tom just entering Harvard, a supercilious young freshman, yet sufficiently a student to run some chance of escaping its worst elements.

Marion's interest in people grew rather than lessened. At seventeen she seemed already a woman, and Aunt Theodosia groaned as she looked at her.

"That child has a distinguished look, Gardiner," she said one day, stopping him on his way out from the library. "Of course I can see that, but she is absolutely indifferent to style, and I believe she would rather sit on the stairs of a tenement-house and talk to the children, than go to the choicest gathering of the season. You'll ruin her prospects."

"What are they?" said Mr. Lacy, after a pause, in which Mrs. Barstow noted that he was much thinner than a year ago, and looked at that moment very strangely old.

"To marry well, of course!" she said, unhesitatingly. "But first to make some distinct place in society. Her name and her fortune entitle her to it. I don't mean that she has n't it. Of course, her name

will take her anywhere — everywhere, certainly, that is worth while; but that is n't enough."

"It must be enough till she herself wishes more or less," he said, slowly. "When I am gone, she will be necessarily somewhat more in your hands, but not long. I wish her always to have perfect liberty."

Mrs. Barstow was silent. His manner forbade response, yet seemed to need one; and as she hesitated, the coachman rang, and she hurried away on her daily round.

Two weeks later, Gardiner Lacy was found sitting at his writing-table, on which his head rested, quite dead, — a little packet before him marked "For Marion only;" which, as she opened it days after, showed the few letters her mother had written him during their only separation. There had been no complaint, no change in daily routine, and they had walked together the day before, talking of Marion's latest theories and hopes as to her own life. Absolutely stunned for a time, she submitted to anything suggested, nor did she rouse till Mrs. Barstow proposed to close the house, spend a quiet winter in Rome, give the summer to travel, and return when the period of mourning was at an end.

"There is something better than that," she said. "I do not want to travel or anything else, but stay where I am now. I shall live in the North End and work, and if that does not satisfy me we will talk about something else afterward."

"My dear child!" Mrs. Barstow began, — and

then stopped. This year of compulsory quiet might as well be given to a freak. Marion was growing every day more charming. Tom raved over her, and Tom's classmates no less. Without positive beauty, since her features were irregular, and her looks a curious mixture of unworldliness and a subtle fascination of which as yet she had no consciousness, it was a marked type, and no one could say what added charm might come.

"Daughter of Vikings," Tom called her, for she kept the fair hair of her childhood, one mass of ripples, which, though brushed straight back, loosened always about the white forehead, each tendril holding sunshine. The cheek-bones were a little too high, the nose a distinct arch, the mouth too wide, and the chin firm and too square. But the eyes with their wonderful dark, deep blue, long lashed, and with the unconscious look of a little child, were her charm; and when she smiled the face held a sweet joyousness to which Tom and many another longed to add a personal quality, which might give some hope of making it their own. The slender, erect figure, neither short nor yet tall, carried the feeling of health and vigor, born of much outdoor life. By the side of the English girls she knew she seemed frail, but her strength and endurance were fully equal to theirs, and they declared at last that the American type was a mystery not to be fathomed since each year demonstrated that she was not alone in her endowment.

"I shall not oppose you, Marion," Mrs. Barstow

said, the pause in which many thoughts and plans darted indications through her mind having been a hardly perceptible one. "Do as you like, only remember that your father has left you partly to me, and that my home is yours also."

"How dear and good you are!" Marion said, with sudden compunction at her own persistent rebellion against Aunt Theodosia's methods. It was only a difference of standpoints, yet strive as she would they would not become identical; and when she had taken all the charm of the gay life of the whole family, dinners, operas, five-o'clock teas, Browning Clubs, and various æsthetic distractions, there was always dissatisfaction and glad return to the old ways. Now it had ended. The old life was done. There was no more companionship for her — such companionship as had grown fuller every year and took hold of every act and thought; so satisfying that to come back to it had been the crown of every pleasure.

"I shall never want to marry," she had said one day with a flush, as Aunt Theodosia said, "When you are married, Marion." "Marriage is n't everything. There is no man alive that I could spend a lifetime with as I could have done with my father. Nobody knew his goodness and his knowledge so well as I. I never found that he lost, even in seeing him with fine Englishmen; and not one American in a thousand can stand that test. They are the most glorious men alive. I don't mean the kind you are all going wild over this winter; that unpleasant young

lord, with bulgy eyes and a horsey look. I mean a kind we seldom get here."

Marion's eyes were dark as she ended, — the look that always came with sudden earnestness, and that Tom said made a delicious shiver run down his spine and despair enter his soul; and Aunt Theodosia, as she watched, settled at last that some one over the sea stood in the way of influence on this side, and would presently appear and make the riddle plain.

"She 's tremendously chummy," said Tom; "but she 's so to all of us, and you never get any farther. I don't see how she manages."

Marion had her way. The old house remained open, moving on with the same household machinery, but she herself came and went irregularly. She had taken rooms in a side street; fitted them up for her children; studied kindergarten methods with passionate interest; and spent time, strength, and income in a fight with conditions. As the year ended, she gave herself more to Aunt Theodosia and her life, falling into certain phases of it with ease. She had made also little visits to Aunt Priscilla, ruling still in the old house and looking with mingled pride and suspicion at the girl whose eyes still held secrets she could not fathom.

Marion had gone once to Plymouth, been wept over by Dilly, and greeted by her grandmother with a distrust born of her last experience with her, and not to be wiped out by any fair seeming of the present. Marion shrank from her no less decidedly, and the

week ended with a sense of great relief for both. She had walked down the shore road, finding the little house given over to a tumultuous Irish family, and gone home with the feeling stronger each year: "There is nothing but sadness in the old places. I will not come again unless I must."

To go back to the children's faces and all the strange life of the crowded streets was best. But restlessness was upon her. She weighed and measured; fretted against obstructions to work and life; grew half despairing over the pressure that made progress for her poor well nigh impossible; and at twenty-one had made up her mind. Aunt Theodosia in the meantime congratulated herself that the child was settling at last into delightful conformity to her own standard, and developing simply unrivalled social powers, that made her the magnet for all that was best and brightest, and faced her with absolute consternation as Marion one day said, calmly:

"Aunt Theodosia, I have settled finally what to do. I loathe America. I am going to England to live, and I do not mean ever to come back again."

"My dear child!" gasped Aunt Theodosia. "America! Loathe it! Why, America is — "

"I will tell you what America is," returned Marion, dispassionately. "It seems to be chiefly vulgar, presumptuous certainty that it knows all, when it has learned only the first letters of its alphabet. It is a truckling and subserviency and snobbishness that cannot be matched anywhere else on the

planet. It is insolence, and hard-heartedness, and grinding the face of the poor, and all that is a shame to a country that calls itself free; and worst of all, it is faithlessness, and indifference, and a base content with selfish living. I have watched it all for a long time, and now I am tired, and am going where I believe there is something better."

Chapter Fourth

THERE had been signs of fog in the early morning, but all had vanished, and at two Marion rode in on the top of a Chelsea bus, descending at Westminster, and strolling toward St. James's Park, where she meant to feed the ducks for half an hour, and then return to the Abbey, in time for the final anthem, with the swell of the noble organ and the fresh voices of the Westminster School boys floating upward among the pointed arches. A sense of exhilaration, born of many causes, filled her; the soft English air; the budding trees; the great towers of Parliament; all this wonderful ground on which she walked. Not three weeks since she had sailed, yet the sense of long-continued possession was strong upon her, and she leaned over the railing of the old bridge across the pond, dropping crumbs mechanically to the ducks below, and remembering those last days at home, Aunt Theodosia's face of absolute and dignified disapproval, and Tom's frantic appeals, both alike today as remote as a remembered dream.

"If you won't marry me, then for heaven's sake marry some of the other fellows and stay at home!"

Tom groaned, when every other form of remonstrance and invective had been tried in vain. "I 'm not up to you, Marion, I know. I don't care a rap for anything but you, but I 'd do anything just because you want it, and that 's just as good as principle, if you 'll count results, and not be forever prying after motives. Oh, why won't you take up with some of us, and stay where you belong? I won't even envy the fellow, if you 'll only stay where I can see you; and if you won't, I 'll shoot myself and then haunt you, — see if I don't."

Tom ruffled his hair wildly, and for the time lost entirely his expression of languid tolerance with its undercurrent of pessimism, — the Harvard look cultivated by his particular set, — and Marion's eyes rested on him for a moment with more interest than usual.

"Yes, there might really be something there," she said, reflectively; "if anything were worth while more than five minutes at a time. But it is n't, you know; you have proved it to me often, — and nothing that you will think or do now is going to make it worth while, as I can see. No, Tom. You may as well stop just here. I am going, and I shall stay till I see good reason for coming back. Now there is not one, save a little natural pull of old associations. If you want me to change, you must be quiet."

Tom ran his hands through his hair despairingly; but Marion turned away, and she gave him no further opportunity for remonstrance in the fortnight

which passed before the final preparations were made. When she sailed out at last from Boston Harbor a line of indignant and mourning friends stood on the dock. Tom stood on the last and shakiest pile of the pier, waving his handkerchief, with a wild wish that he might suddenly go to the bottom and thus compel a temporary if not permanent interest. They had all been there when she had sailed two summers before, and she stood by her father's side looking back to the gilded dome of the State House and the familiar spires, and then forward with the glad rush of thought toward the England she loved; and her eyes filled with sudden tears as she remembered. Aunt Theodosia had taken it for granted that she would go to the same old friends, with whom each year they had spent longer and longer time, but still suspected something else in the background.

"As your father's cousin, and as near as a sister to him," she said, "I ought to be allowed some questions. But it was his principle to leave you free entirely, and I must also. Only, my dear child, I beg you not to forget that English society demands more yielding to conventionality than American, and that people there will not know who you are, as we do, — and don't be too peculiar."

Marion had smiled, but it was the inscrutable smile which enraged Tom and made Aunt Theodosia feel, as she affirmed, absolutely wild and as helpless as a baby. That was all over; and as she turned to face the soft wind from the sea, the spring

in her feet seeming to answer the dancing waves,— there was only the shadow of regret. A great expectation was upon her. Not a hope, since a hope makes for itself a definite formulation, but an outreaching of every impulse and desire toward an unknown but coming good. Through all the passage this went with her, the unseen but certain companion; and though she walked and talked and played at ship's-coil with the few who kept their feet, and listened to strange confidences, the necessity for which seems born of a sea voyage, she would have had abundant companionship in this sense of new life to come, mysterious, overflowing with possibility, yet always indefinable.

One thing was clear. The beginning must be left unhampered. For once she would be quite alone, quite free, and find how far she was sufficient, how far insufficient, for herself. She wished she were an artist, since this allowed all that she sought, and if need came it would be very easy to set up a studio and play again with clay as she had done at sixteen.

"Are you going over for work, or just for pleasure?" a student on his way to Germany *via* England had asked her; and after an instant's hesitation she had answered, "To work."

The words seemed to crystallize all wandering tendencies, and she saw her way clear. She would begin in Chelsea and old Cheyne Walk, where artists thronged, and where she saw always the stately figures that had come and gone in the days when Sir

Thomas More lived there his gentle life, and the form no less a vision, — the old man with grizzled hair and heavy brows, under which the melancholy eyes looked out, pathetic under all the cynicism. Carlyle, George Eliot, Landor, the Brownings, — the names of a generation nearly gone, — all had their place in the quiet streets. She would begin there, if possible, in a house in which some friends had once lived, and which also was part of a past generation. She remembered the rooms, overlooking the embankment and the river, one of which could easily be studio, study, or what she willed. And there, too, was Chelsea Old Church, with its swarm of children, and everywhere forlorn, bedraggled women making part of the steady stream through King's Road. There would be plenty to help. That was the chief point, and for the rest she would wait.

Thus it happened that after a day or two at the little Quaker hotel in Bishopsgate Without, to which she had gone at once, and where all remembered her, she found the old rooms at her disposal, and took up her life with the instant settling into routine which seems inevitable in a country where all forms of action have had a thousand years and more in which to make for themselves ruts. As for the house, it kept its old expression of a certain dingy stateliness, regarded by its present occupant as so much more capital, valueless where the average British lodger was concerned, but a mine when Americans were in question, since they demanded the venerable, and even

accepted general mustiness as its symbol and equivalent. But mustiness had only a small and inevitable share in the old house, scrubbed and polished and black-leaded, and dealt with daily after the most rigid canons of British housekeeping. There was even something military in its exactness, as befitted the name on the door. Mrs. General Pattle — for so her cards also read — wore her hair in a crop of frisky little curls, bleached to a pale yellow, and made herself up on the theatrical pattern which seems to include one half of the average Englishwomen after forty. For the other division the election is to appear in hair brushed uncompromisingly behind or over the ears, and in garments whose general defiance of all laws of color, fit, or harmony are never-ending amazement to the American woman of the same age. In fact the two classes are equally mysterious, but the advantage lies with the former in that the surprise varies from day to day.

Under her pale curls Mrs. General Pattle showed a pair of shrewd, kindly blue eyes, with heavy grizzled brows ignored in the bleaching; a spot of color on her high cheek-bones, which indicated a Scotch tinge somewhere; and a general look of capability emphasized by every motion. Evidently her taste had been formed and fixed at a far earlier period than the æsthetic one then ruling in London, for her compact little figure was clad in Dolly Varden patterns and hung with much bog-oak and agate decoration. It carried also an atmosphere of utter good will and a

conviction that nobody could be better dressed; while summers long devoted to experiments with baths of every nature, from Tunbridge and Epsom to Carlsbad inclusive, gave her the air of what she called "a genuine cosmopolitanism, me dear."

Why any Mrs. General should have sunk to lodgers was in the beginning not plain, but was made so as soon as the owner of the title had determined for herself the quality of the new-comer. In any case it was no miscellaneous crowd that ascended her stairs and used her latch-key at will. Two floors only were assigned to them, and of these Marion had the lower one, — the upper, which she would have chosen, being rented permanently to an invisible some one, who had thus far given no sign of tenancy.

"It's a gentleman, me dear," Mrs. Pattle had stated in the beginning. "That I will not conceal, but his manners are such that he could never offend, and he only comes and goes, as it were, except now and then, when he bides a bit. You might go a month and never hear him once, and often it is so. He's English, and that I did n't mean to have, liking Americans the best — oh, much the best, me dear, for lodgers. But he's not so set up as many Englishmen, and so I mind less. I'm Scotch myself, though brought up in England, and so it's natural I should have a quick eye for English faults. We've enough of our own, 't is true, but we've none like theirs. You'll be quite free and no spying upon you, for I'm well used to Americans, and they will go

their own way, and a good right to it, I say, for they pay, and never a word, and I 'm in cold terrors for fear I 'll cheat them, maybe, all because of this way they have, that 's an obligation on all mankind to be fair with them. 'T is not rational — that I will say — not to scan a bill for the items, that an Englishman will go over one by one, if it took all night, but 't is more comfortable, me dear, when there 's never been need of dickering nor haggling, and never did a thought of that come to me till — I 've been a terrible fool in my life, me dear. I think I 'll even tell the tale some day for your warning and instruction, but not yet;" and Mrs. General Pattle, shaking her bog-oak chains and bracelets cheerfully, went with a martial step out of the room.

Since then, absorbed by some country guests, she had appeared but seldom, looking in for a moment to say, "And how do you find yourself to-day, me dear?" and then vanishing.

The little maid who brought her meals and served her with growing devotion had come from Devonshire, answered to the name of Polly Veal, and knew London only as a tale, her dreams of bliss being a walk in the evening up King's Road, or a Sunday outing in Battersea Park. It was all unusual, even when most real; and the absolute release from every social claim, the certainty that till she chose to speak she was lost in this ocean of humanity, so far from oppressing, brought to Marion a certain exhilaration and exaltation in which she moved. Day after day

she went over the familiar ground, reading in the museum or wandering among the marbles, searching out once more all remains of old London, and walking as indefatigably as either Dickens or Macaulay, those two most opposite haunters and explorers of every secret spot in London streets. Till the spell had lessened she could do no definite work, and in yielding to it there was a certain compulsion, as if some other will moved with her own and shared the new sense of self-possession. To-day she had put some biscuit in her pocket and leaned over the parapet of the bridge, tossing a crumb now and then, and smiling at the struggle below.

"Even the ducks are immemorial," she thought; "for their ancestors paddled toward gay King Charlie and quacked and dove, precisely as their successors are diving and quacking for me. It is all a bit of the general solidity, a repose next door to Nirvana, to pass from the eternally shifting to the eternally stable, and cease the unending effort to resolve the dirty grays into the original blacks and whites that made them. There is comfortable, rational conservatism, even in the ducks."

She threw a sudden shower of crumbs over a placid white one, looking with small, unwinking eyes toward the biscuit in her hand and joining at once in the tumultuous pursuit of the unexpected wealth. Now and then one rode serenely, taking the morsel that drifted in its way with the calmness born of certainty that more was sure to come; but for the most part

scramble was the order, the strongest quacking loud satisfaction at the flight of the weakest. These, finding no place, either swam away to secluded corners, or gave themselves to that fury of insatiable washing likely to overtake a duck at any moment of its day, and a certain compensation for all sorrows known to duck life. Here and there a pair of red legs erect in the air showed that the owner was taking active measures to secure his share, but for the most part the surface held enough, and the many-colored swimmers paddled from point to point, making critical selection of the largest bits and quacking loud disapproval of any similar attempt on the part of their brethren.

"You are delightfully human," said Marion, unconsciously aloud, coloring as some one who had paused for a moment to watch the struggle smiled, and then, as he saw her flush, lifted his hat courteously and walked on toward the Abbey. He was tall, and slenderly yet firmly built, with dark, serious eyes that, as the smile faded, held a certain wistful look, that lingered with Marion after he had passed on.

"That was a good face," she thought: "the face of an honest gentleman with a soul; but that look belongs to a woman, and not a man. I wonder how it got there. He is probably a poet."

She smiled at her own fancy, tossed the final bit to the ducks, and after a little lingering along the river turned toward the Abbey, and soon was in her favorite place in the Poet's Corner, where she could hear the

music, yet not be distracted by the obtrusive monuments of the central aisle. Her neighbor of the bridge had had the same thought, perhaps. At any rate, there he sat near the Shakespeare monument, whose noble figure faces the world in serene surety of its place and right. Marion looked again at the man's face, trying, as was her fashion, to define its meaning. Sensitive, delicate, yet strong it was, every feature clear-cut, and the drooping mustache not hiding the firm lines of the lips, firm in spite of the gentleness of the mouth. The dark brown hair was closely cut, with only an indication that its natural tendency was to wave, and the forehead rose broad and white above the slightly bronzed cheeks.

"A soldier, perhaps," she thought. "He looks as if he had come from some campaign, and yet there is the look of a student, too."

Speculation ended here, for the anthem had begun, and she leaned her head against the screen as the clear notes rose higher and higher, seeming at last part of the many-colored light of the glorious windows, which darkened slowly till the aisles were lost in shadow and the candles burned dim. It was so dark that, as she roused to a consciousness of it, it puzzled her, since it was still early and the sky had been only moderately clouded when she entered. When the last notes of the organ died away, she still lingered. The people were an extraordinary length of time in getting out, and presently one of the old vergers, who knew her face, came to her and said:

"Can I 'elp you, miss? Did you horder a cab to wait, maybe? The fog 's uncommon thick."

Marion hastily made her way to the south door, from which the last stragglers were moving, and uttered an exclamation of dismay as she saw the character of the fog, a dense, dirty yellow masking everything, and thickening every moment.

"I 'm hafraid you 'll 'ave trouble, miss," the verger said. "I 'll see if there 's a cab houtside."

He vanished in the fog, returning speedily with a shake of the head.

"They 're hall taken, miss, but I 'm doubting if they 'll get anywhere. Hit 's lucky hit 's Sunday, and no traffic, for maybe you can make out to walk."

"Allow me to look a little farther," a voice said; and the stranger, who had been standing just behind them, came forward. "There are probably plenty up in the Square, and I will send one down if you will wait."

"Thanks," Marion said after an instant's hesitation. "If you are really going that way, and it will not trouble you."

"On the contrary," he said, and disappeared in the fog. The old verger closed the doors.

"I 'll be on the lookout," he said; and Marion followed him as he slowly put out the candles, leaving one or two, which made only faint yellow spots against the shadow. She sat down at last, the old man going at intervals to the door, and presently the stranger appeared again.

"I 'm awfully sorry," he said; "but the fog is really most uncommon, and the people coming out of St. Martin's seem to have taken every cab."

"I think I can walk," Marion said, hastily. "It is only Chelsea, and there is nothing to do but go straight on."

"I am going to Chelsea, too," he said, "and if you will allow me, can help you, perhaps."

"You 'd better not try it halone," the old verger said, his look of suspicion having changed to approval. "There 's never hany knowing what turn such a fog will take, hand a man 's 'andy when there 's trouble."

Marion went out silently, a little disturbed, but with no want of confidence in her guide.

"It 's a little too late for this sort of thing," he said, "but it is a part of the London experience. It will all be tradition by the end of the twentieth century, and then we shall be immensely ashamed of ourselves for having submitted to it so long. We shall be certain of a cab at Victoria," he added, as they gave themselves to the slow progress forward; but when Victoria was reached, the policeman at the gate shook his head.

"There 's not a cab to be 'ad for love nor for money," he said, "for the hexpress his just in, hand hevery one taken."

"We must go right on, then," Marion said, resolutely. "It is not so bad as it seems, if only it will not thicken any deeper."

"Fortunately, I have had this to do more than

once," her guide replied. "I know all the turns. Where am I to take you?"

"To Cheyne Walk," Marion said. "I am so sorry, since it is so far."

"That is my own goal," he said as they crept on; and then he talked of Chelsea and the odd life to be found there, keeping always close to wall or railing as the fog thickened, more and more pungent with smoke and soot caught in its meshes.

Marion's eyes smarted and her throat burned as she walked on, each step less and less assured, for even the lamp-posts had lost their outline, and a yard ahead nothing was discernible. It seemed hours before the end of King's Road was reached, and the stranger said:

"Do you turn to the right or the left?"

"To the right," Marion answered. "It is only a few houses down; but you will never be able to see the numbers. It is Mrs. General Pattle's."

"Ah!" he said, "that is mine also. We are neighbors. I am the other lodger."

Marion felt no surprise. It was all part of the general mystery in which she moved. The stranger was feeling his way carefully along the railings, and once ran up some steps and struck a match or two as he searched for the number.

"Three doors more," he said as he returned; and Marion followed, a long breath of relief coming involuntarily as the door opened at last and she found herself in her own place.

"Thank you so very much!" she said. "I do not know what I could have done without you," — and she passed on to her own rooms. The fire burned brightly. Polly stood waiting, wringing her hands with anxiety, and melting into tears as she saw Marion's tired face; and Mrs. Pattle herself appeared, to testify to her own alarm and her satisfaction at the ending of the affair.

"The lodger!" she cried, as Marion explained how she had come. "And you not knowing his name even, nor he yours any more, — unless, maybe, he told you."

"No," Marion said, smiling. "Everything but the fog was forgotten."

"That 's quite natural and proper, me dear," Mrs. Pattle said, "after all that you 'd gone through; but it 's no harm your knowing, though you could live here a lifetime, maybe, and never meet him. It 's not so bad a name at all, since there 's a Scotch beginning somewhere, though it 's English he is now, and it 's short and easy to speak. Ballantyne it is, with a ring of the Covenanters in it; and where he comes from, that I don't know, though he 'd the finest of references, that I would never read, more 'n the names, since his face tells the only tale I 'm wanting, and his name 's a true one, — John Ballantyne."

Chapter Fifth

THERE was ample time for Marion to put together vague memories aroused by the name, suddenly spoken and unheard since the day in which she had listened to Friend Barstow's droning voice as he told of the shipwreck, and the faces of the children seemed to start out before her: John Ballantyne. Over and over the name said itself, yet it must be pure coincidence, for long ago the surviving child had probably returned to his own place. But possibilities would come uppermost in the interminable two days in which fog ruled, breaking for a moment to settle again, dirtier, yellower, more insufferable every hour, invading every inch of space, and pervading alike food, drink, and breath.

Most of all in her wanderings came the question why no word of them had ever been spoken by her father. Neither through him nor in any other fashion was there the slightest clue to the family or its history. Her impulse had been to ask, but now she rejected it. Why make an inquiry that might be disagreeable to him and disillusioning to herself? Outwardly everything, in voice, dress, and manner,

indicated the type of Englishmen best known and best liked. If an American, — and as she thought, she added at once, "Impossible," — he was outside any plan the year had for her. Till that ended she would invite no possible complication; and she put away resolutely the persistent question that with every recurrence of the name refused to be put down.

To hold to such resolution would seem to be easy. The double floors and thick walls of the old house deadened all sounds save now and then a faint echo of Mrs. Pattle's high-pitched voice in some Scotch ballad, a voice that seemed an only slightly humanized bagpipe, and that wailed at stray intervals through strange chants that may have fired the souls of her Gaelic ancestors, but had rightful place to-day only on moor or heather. From above no sound came, and as a day or two went on she dismissed further thought of the disturbing name and busied herself absorbedly with her clay.

"The fog was worse than in all the winter, me dear," Mrs. Pattle said a few evenings later, coming in with a manner that indicated something in reserve, to which fog was merely the preliminary. "A woman must e'en give way to it, but a man 's no that way, and Mr. Ballantyne went out and off as if it were but clear sunshine. He 'll not be up, I 'm thinking, before January, maybe. It 's not lonely you 're ever getting, is it, Miss Lacy?"

"Not yet," Marion made answer abstractedly, for there was something quite wrong with the eye-

brow of her figure, which appeared to bulge suddenly.

"I could wish you 'd said a different word," Mrs. Pattle continued, "for here 's one that comes all on account of being certain you 're lonely. She does n't bide for fog or aught else, though I said to her plain, you saw no one, being in mourning. 'T is an old acquaintance of my husband the general's, though indeed I would not ask on such a ground, since she has a name of her own, and a good one. I 'm doubting you 've ever heard it. She 's Miss Barbara Ryde, and indeed I think she 's coming up whether or no."

"And indeed I am," said a calm but determined voice from the doorway; and Marion, astonished, but wishing to spare Mrs. Pattle's feelings, turned and faced the new arrival, who entered as if accustomed to have place made for her, and advanced with a face as calm as her voice.

"Call me impertinent if you like," she said; "I see it in your eye, and you may as well say it. But I am interested. That is my excuse. I am interested in a good many Americans, and, do you know, they return it! I wish to talk with you. May I have the opportunity?"

"Apparently, yes," said Marion, in whom indignation still struggled with amusement, and who offered a chair instinctively rather than willingly. Miss Ryde's excellent figure was clad in what appeared to be a gray poplin bag, guiltless of drapery, save a very abbreviated overskirt, which as she moved forward

gave indication that the divided skirt had been adopted. Her gray hair, smooth as satin, was brushed behind her ears, and twisted into as uncompromising a knot as ever adorned a New England woman of faculty. Her cheeks were pink as a baby's, and her brown eyes, which had little yellow spots here and there, were clear and steady in look, with an occasional twinkle which testified to a consciousness of other people's peculiarities, however they might dwell upon her own.

"I never lose an opportunity to get a new idea, or to make an interesting acquaintance," she said, after a little silence, in which she looked straight into Marion's eyes and nodded approvingly. "The difficulty is there is so seldom opportunity for either. Society seems to be trying to run itself into one mould, and I have to admit it succeeds admirably. I go about searching for the real under all this veneer, and it is extraordinary how well it has been tucked away. To be sure, definitions of the word vary. You look real. How much so are you now, actually?"

"That would be very difficult to state," said Marion after a moment, in which she met Miss Ryde's twinkling eyes. "Do you think it worth while to try at present?"

"Perhaps not, though really you might as well. You can't evade me. I shall know for myself whether you tell me or not," said her visitor, after another pause of scrutiny. "I am a more respon-

sible person than I seem. I have an old house in Cheyne Walk, just below here, that I am certain you would like to see, and that I shall be delighted to have you. I am at home Sunday evenings, and you can come then if you like. On other evenings I am never at home, for I go to clubs. Clubs are my chief interest, — clubs and people; but the two are synonymous. I have heard myself called the Queen of Clubs. I am going to one now. Would you like to come, too?"

"Yes," said Marion, who felt as if under a spell, and who rose now mechanically to get her hat, while Mrs. Pattle, who in early stages of the interview had wrung her hands in the background, sunk into a chair and gazed relieved yet reproachful at Miss Ryde.

"There, there," said the latter; "you see that no harm is done. I told you so — and your lodger will be the better off for knowing me."

"That 's perfectly true," said Mrs. Pattle. "But I for one think there 's no harm in sticking to a little form; and if you 'd waited a bit, it would have been the same thing in the end, and more credit to you and to me, and not as if we were wild savages, which, to be sure, the English were in the beginning, and it 's not rightly out of them yet."

"And long may it be before it is," returned Miss Ryde, undaunted; "since it 's that that 's the one grain of salt in a generation given to lying and truckling and meanness such as old days never knew. It is because I will be a living protest that I waste no

time in preliminaries; and your lodger ought to be thankful that it is so, and understand her privileges, as she undoubtedly will before I am through with her. Not that I am meaning to suck my orange and toss the skin away when I am done," she added to Marion, who had re-entered in time to hear her last words. "Did you ever have an interior flash and know what things meant? I had one as I came up the stairs, and another the first time I looked at you, and made up my mind it was not for nothing. Queer lights come to me on people and things as I go searching, and here and there finding the real, though mostly the sham comes uppermost. To-day I believe it the real. And now will you come to the Club?"

Miss Ryde arose, tied on her bonnet firmly, arranged a small gray Shetland shawl over her ears, buttoned her cloak, grasped her umbrella by the middle, and went with a firm step down the stairs and into the street. A mild drizzle had followed the light fog of the morning, but she did not put up her umbrella, and walked on as if enjoying it.

"The only drawback to life is my ears," she said, presently. "You need n't try to talk, for I can't hear at present; but that is not my fault — it belongs to the generations before me. They 've all gone deaf at sixty, and as I am nearing fifty I watch never to be damp about the ears, and wear this Shetland, light but efficient, you see, summer and winter. Do you know where you are going?"

"Hardly," said Marion, more and more bewildered. "It is not a chapel of any sort?"

"That is impossible," returned Miss Ryde, with scorn. "I wish either church or chapel had the thing I 'll show you to-night; but none have, save here and there where a man has light in his mind and not a patent extinguisher. It 's a Radical Club, and here we are."

"Then you are a Socialist!"

"Not I," said Miss Ryde, who had pushed back her shawl. "I watch what they are doing, — and they do some things well; that is all."

They had been walking swiftly up King's Road; and now Miss Ryde turned suddenly, entered a door in an old-fashioned building, and went through a narrow passage in which several men were standing, who nodded silently. One of them opened the door into a large, low-ceiled room filled with people, chiefly men, with a sprinkling of women and children; a platform at one end holding a table, and some chairs and a small piano, some final chords on which were just being struck by a girl who slipped away from it quietly and took a vacant place in the front row.

"Look at her well," said Miss Ryde, as she disencumbered herself of the shawl and sat down, looking very much at ease and nodding here and there. "Look at her well. You 'll not see many faces like that. Never mind her gown. Her father 's a poet and her mother an æsthete, and her gowns are the

joint result of the madness of all three. It 's her face I see, not her gown."

Marion's eyes were already fixed upon it, for the girl had turned to speak to some one behind her. It was an exquisite face, delicate and sensitive in every line, the soft, waving hair making an aureole about it, and the deep, dark eyes holding the direct, child-like look of Marion's own.

"There was never one like her," said Miss Ryde. "Now listen, and you 'll hear things that are newer to you than to me; things you 've never heard, I 'll be bound."

The speaker of the evening had come forward: a short, dark, eager-looking man, greeted with a storm of applause, which he received with a little impatience, as if it were a distinct waste of time, and checked suddenly with a deep "Let us come to business."

There was another round before he could speak again, and a voice from the background cried out, "This is our business, John! Now, you can attend to yours, if you like."

"That is John Burns," said Miss Ryde in a whisper, and then relapsed into contented silence, as his speech began. Marion remembered now that three years before he had been pointed out to her in Hyde Park as the man who could make twenty thousand people hear; and she could well believe it, since the voice was a deep bass, subdued now to the requirements of the room, but of a ringing quality that

seemed to demand and imply great spaces. The Scotch burr was on his tongue, though his English was perfect, and he spoke with the entire ease and freedom of the Scotchman, who in this respect has close kinship with the American, the "added drop of nervous fluid" being their possession no less than ours. He was an agitator. That she knew, but save for the word itself there was no hint of revolt or upheaval in this evening's work, and she listened, at first critically and coldly, then fascinated and absorbed.

"Agitate, organize, educate." This was the refrain; and to-night the third word led, and she found that it was the final lecture on the three needs of the present. He showed men their ignorance. He demanded what right they had to expect betterment till they had testified willingness to learn, and then he told them what and how they must learn.

"You are on the way," he said. "There are clearer heads listening to me to-night, — there are clearer heads among you workers, than you 'll find in the House of Lords. Go on with the work you have begun. Make yourselves fit for the life that must come, but that won't and can't come till you are fit. Revolt is useless. Naught can help you but yourselves. Study, men, and women as well, — study. Here is the chance. Learn what there is to do before you seek to do it, and be sure that to your faith you add knowledge, and don't howl for things that you have not begun to comprehend. These sound like Conservative words, but call them what you like,

they are words of truth. I know what I am talking about; and I say to you and to every Radical Club in London the same word: the faith that has not knowledge for its foundation means destruction for its holders. Educate, educate, educate! — and God speed the time when every soul of you will know not only his need and his right, but why he needs it and why it is his right!"

The running fire of "Hear, hear!" changed to prolonged applause as he sat down. Half a dozen were on their feet at once, and for the next half-hour there was an eager discussion as to methods, each man practically a reporter of the work already going on, since incidental mention came in of classes at many points.

"Ten minutes more," the chairman said, and Marion turned suddenly as the final speaker rose to describe the work in a certain class in political science, the teacher of which had kept silence, though the result seemed admirable beyond anything yet accomplished. It was the voice of the stranger who had guided her home in the fog, raised now, but quiet still; a full rich voice, English in every accent, yet smooth and flowing, with none of the hitches characteristic of English public speaking. Miss Ryde looked round, well pleased.

"That 's young Ballantyne," she said in a low tone. "He 's a Fabian, or partly so, anyway. He 'll be in Parliament soon, and the sooner the better. If one could ever get at him for a bit of talk, — but he

is busy here and busy there, and never to be had when one wants him. It was he first told me what these Clubs were like. Now it 's over and we 're to go, unless you like to watch them out or speak to some of them."

Miss Ryde had risen and arranged her head according to her theories, but paused now as one and another came up; and Marion looked at the faces, all of them of working-men, but of an order with which she was not familiar, since they were as evidently thinking men, with lines deep graven by long pondering over many problems. Two or three of them shook hands heartily; and the girl who had played, and who had come up to Miss Ryde, and stood now watching Marion's face, smiled as she met her puzzled look, and said:

"You must come again and find out what it all means. Perhaps you would help us in the teaching, if you are living in Chelsea."

"If there is anything I can teach," Marion said, heartily. "But who needs it? They have taught me some things already that I did not know."

"I will come and see you and tell you all about it," the girl said; "or Miss Ryde can. I see you are with her."

"And she will be again, Eleanor, my dear," said Miss Ryde, with a nod. "It 's true I only called on her at seven, and the acquaintance is a short one, but it is bound to be longer, and you will help. This is Eleanor Norris, Miss Lacy, and you will have no

better guide to some of the things you are to know. If you choose to come and see me, you will see her, too, for she comes and goes as she pleases, and Jane bears with her better than with most."

"Jane is a very much more conservative and reputable person than Miss Ryde herself, as you will soon discover," said Miss Norris with a smile, her eyes still studying Marion's face; and Miss Ryde nodded gravely as if the fact were incontrovertible.

"If you want to know where you have been," she went on, as they made their way into the street, "that is the Eleusis Club, — a nonsensical name to my thinking, but they seem to like it. And now I 'll see you home, since there was no arrangement for your maid's coming, though indeed it 's as safe here as in your own rooms. There 's another Club in Battersea that I go to to-morrow, and, if you like, we will try it together. And will you come to me Sunday, — not for half an hour, but to stay the evening, and to see how you like it? You may not like me, but you will like my house. Me you are not obliged to like under any circumstances."

Miss Ryde stopped under a street lamp and nodded emphatically as she looked into Marion's face.

"Do you know why I came this evening?" she said. "I have no time for visits and ceremonies, and I have naught to do longer with what is called society. But I saw you a week ago, sitting there by the old Carlyle, and the way you looked at him made me watch you; and when I saw you go into Mrs.

Pattle's, I knew, of course, you were American, and I said I would know you if you did n't contradict your face. I 'll come to you to-morrow evening at seven, and you shall see what you think of Battersea, unless indeed you have had enough."

"I will go with pleasure," Marion said, entirely reconciled to her abrupt acquaintance, and looking after her with interest as she strode away from the door which had just opened.

"Come in here a minute or two, me dear," said Mrs. Pattle, emerging from her own rooms as Marion entered. "I 've been watching to speak with you; for though I said to myself that you were sensible enough to see what Miss Ryde was like, there 's no telling what she 'll do. She 's always watching the Americans I have here, but there 's never one before she gave the entry to her house. With all her ways she 's a lady born and bred, and she holds to the old for all she runs after the new. You 'll see that for yourself. But there 's naught on the Lord's earth that goes its way never caring like your English-woman that has money, and blood enough to know what her place is worth; and she has both. I 'll tell you a bit about her."

Marion had settled into a chair, and Mrs. Pattle crossed her hands and looked at her with delighted approval.

"Her sense is wonderful, and her ways are many and past finding out,—and if that is Scripture, which I do not feel certain, may the Lord forgive me!"

Mrs. Pattle said devoutly. "Miss Ryde's father was a city man, it is true, but he married Sir Archibald Hetherington's daughter, the only one, and the old place in Devonshire, theirs since the day of that robber and spoiler of men, William the Norman himself. Mr. Thomas Ryde was a merchant, 't is true, but of good stock, since the house is well nigh as old as London itself; but nobody knows why she fell in love, or how they settled upon it. 'T was his money brought up the old place, that the last Hetherington had run into the ground, and the Jews with their hands deep in every Hetherington pocket; and 't was he bought the old house here in Chelsea where Miss Ryde was born. 'T was a male heir must have the Devonshire property, and so she was out, for never a son had come to them, and her mother dead in her babyhood. So she lived on with her father, a man well on in years when he married, — quite fifty, I am told, and dying at eighty, — that collected everything till the house was a museum, as you 'll see, me dear, and she the despair of Jane her maid and all the old servants, because she is always having strange people. Not that you 're strange," Mrs. Pattle hastened to add; "for indeed it is plain you 've known the best as well as she. But there 's never telling what she 'll do, and I was fearful this evening you 'd not see 't was her way of paying a visit, and maybe feel I could have kept her out. The angel with the flaming sword could not keep her out if once she settled to come in; but for all that she 's Miss Barbara Hether-

ington Ryde, and one must bear with her. She knew my husband the general well, and has much kindness for me, so that I must e'en let her go her own way; and I 'm glad you 're not offended, me dear, for I would not have you so, though indeed you 're too sensible, I 'm certain, and you 'd see she was not daft a bit, but only used to her way, and like all the English, with no mind to see that another might have their own as well. And I 'll go now, and not go on, me dear, for you 're tired and must rest; and good-night to you."

Chapter Sixth

"WHAT are you in England for? What are so many Americans over here for?" said Miss Ryde abruptly, as she sat waiting the next evening, while Marion made ready for the trip to the unknown regions of Battersea. She was in the same uniform as on the preceding evening, but had added to her generally determined aspect an air of calm proprietorship, which ignored any fact of slight foundation for its existence, and seemed prepared to encompass hereafter every going out and coming in.

"You think I 'm curious, but I am not!" pursued Miss Ryde, after a pause in which Marion looked at her silently for a moment. "I am quite indifferent to the world at large, but if I am to know any one, while I take them precisely where I find them, I like also to know the purpose of the time in which I find them and what they are after. I wish to ask, also, how Auberon Forster's portrait is in that row on your chimney-piece?"

"Naturally because he was one of my father's best friends," said Marion.

"Ha!" said Miss Ryde. "That accounts for

it. Now I see what has puzzled me. I saw you as a child, — fourteen or thereabouts, — at his house; the only time that I was ever there. I abominate lawyers, and I have no taste for Assyrian dynasties, and so naturally avoided him. Then you know London?"

"Perfectly till the last three years," Marion replied.

"Ha!" said Miss Ryde again, and remained silent till they had crossed the bridge.

"I suppose you know that an English girl of your age and position could n't do what you are doing now," she said, suddenly stopping short and facing Marion. "Americans do much as they please, and they are right. You have fallen into good hands, and no matter what you may think, you are in better when you fall into mine. I shall not interfere. You are only to understand that I mean to have some eye to you, and that I wish you to come to my house, where you will undoubtedly meet some you have known and more you will like to know. Will you come? I do not ask twice, and I never ask any one whom I do not distinctly wish to see."

"Yes, I will come," Marion said; and Miss Ryde, placing her umbrella against the bridge, shook hands formally and seriously, and then resuming it, strode on in silence, broken now and then by half words and small guttural sounds as if a flood of speech were struggling to make its way.

The evening held hardly less interest than the

preceding one, and on Saturday morning Miss Norris called and asked if she would help one evening in the week in the work they were doing in Chelsea.

"You must talk with my father about it all," she said. "We are always at Miss Ryde's for Sunday evenings, and you are coming, she tells me."

"Yes, I am coming," Marion said, "though I did not mean to see people till—"

She stopped and colored a little. Precisely what she had wished to say was hardly plain to herself, and how could she make it plain to another? Miss Norris hurried away, and Marion, after an ineffectual attempt to work, went to South Kensington and spent the rest of the day in the Museum.

Why her pulse should quicken and a little thrill go through her as she lifted the quaint knocker of the old house early Sunday evening, Marion could not tell, but the quickening was there, and remained as a stern and inflexible maid opened the door and preceded her up the broad stairway to the drawing-room. Miss Barbara Ryde in black velvet gown and some beautiful old lace was a creature so distinct from the shrouded one who for several evenings had been her escort to strange corners of Battersea, that Marion would hardly have recognized her.

"You are to take Miss Lacy up and see that she is comfortable, Jane," were her first words. "She has not come to go but to stay, and indeed that is so with most that come. I have no time for transient people."

Marion followed the inflexible Jane, getting no distinct impression of anything but thick Turkey carpets, innumerable cabinets and stands, and walls covered with pictures, miniatures, and all that could hang. She was still in mourning, worn in deference to Aunt Theodosia's wish, but against her own, and which she had meant long ago to put aside; but the beautiful head with its rippling hair, and the pure paleness with a hint of color in the cheeks, were both accented by the black. Marion had the Lacy hands, not small but exquisitely formed, and Jane gazed upon her with as much approval as could be accorded to an American, remarking to the parlor maid as she descended, that for one who came from a country where most were savages, she had a look that might even be English.

A little group was gathered at the end of the room when Marion re-entered it, where a set of drawings were hung in a strong light, one of which had been taken down and was in the hands of a gentleman whose back was turned.

"A man perfect in his way and beautifully unfit for walking in the way of any other man," she heard, with instant desire to know who it could be. Various people were scattered about, and from another group Miss Norris came forward cordially.

"My father is here," she said, "and he wants to know you, and a friend also who is sitting by him. Miss Ryde will take you presently when her sofa is empty. It is true German fashion that rules here.

The sofa is the centre, and we all take our turn in going up to it, but it is not so much of an ordeal as it sounds. Papa, this is our new friend you have so wanted to talk with, and here is a quiet corner for us all."

Mr. Norris put out a cordial hand as he rose; a tall man with close-curling gray hair and beard, and brown eyes like his daughter's, a gentle, rather dreamy face, yet lighting with quick gleams of humor; a man of many tastes, and a writer of delicate, graceful verse, with often a stronger quality. Marion knew the poems, but cared most for his art work, for his knowledge was beyond question, and his taste of the simplest and purest. He had been in the midst of earnest talk as his daughter spoke, and Marion after a word or two said, "Pray go on, and let me listen, if I may," and seated herself by the stout lady, who had made room with a smile and continued the interrupted remark.

"It is excellent theory, but your theory would wipe out a room like this," she said.

"This room is abnormal and outside my judgment," said Mr. Norris. "In one way it is justifiable, since it is a growth, and means the devotion of an intelligent collector. But it is a museum, chiefly, and will find its proper place presently at South Kensington, since these treasures belong to the public, not to the individual."

"There crops out your socialism," said the first speaker. "Without the individual the community

would hardly have been likely to possess them. The fact is, individualism must lead, else your community will go bare. It requires the highest development of individualism to have just perception of values."

"Norris's theory wipes out individualism and values together," interrupted a short man with fiery hair and gleaming blue eyes, who had crossed the room silently, and stood now looking at Marion, whose eyes were fixed on Mr. Norris's face, and who recognized the voice as the one that had been speaking when she entered.

"What is value?" asked the latter, with a smile at Marion, — a smile as fascinating as the daughter's.

"That depends upon your chosen authority in Political Economy," returned the new-comer, seating himself in a three-cornered chair with an air of the most absolute ease and satisfaction. "So far as I am concerned, it lies in the possession of anything I want at the minute, from smooth-flowing ink to toast of the right shade of brown. It is possible that this may come under the head of the definition of wealth, but the two to me are synonymous. Sensation heightens in the same ratio as the value, or would, for instance, if I could persuade Miss Ryde here to give me one of her Blakes for one of my Turners, — both madmen, it is true, but then they could draw, which remark does not apply to the modern school."

"On the contrary, Turner never pretended to draw," said Mr. Norris, in his slow musical voice.

"His methods are a splash and a squirt; a splash from a rainbow and a squirt of pure sunshine, I admit, but no more drawing, Beresford, than in that pea-green 'nocturne' I looked at with you yesterday."

"There is too little and too much and never just enough," said Mr. Beresford with a groan, but preserving his cheerful expression. "As you saw the pea-green nocturne, you saw also, then, the study in anatomy next it: the livid young woman, resurrected apparently after several days underground, and the modern conception of Hope. She needs it, poor soul, for nothing else is left; but why it must smell of the grave in order to meet popular expectation, who shall say? Blake is preposterous, but then he puts his corpses where they belong and has a good sense of flesh and blood. That bit I had in my hand a while ago, — I 'd give, — well, a fair price," he said, interrupting himself, for Miss Ryde had risen and was moving toward them.

"Busy as usual, running down whatever is good and running up whatever is bad?" she said, interrogatively.

"No, unless your Blakes are frauds," returned Mr. Beresford, cheerfully. "I have often thought there was grave doubt as to that lowest one. He 's easy to imitate, you see, and the demand for him came all at once, and it is quite likely you might be deceived where your father could not be."

"I?" said Miss Ryde, with a gasp. "The lowest one, you say; the cream of them all? Miss Lacy,

come and see, and whether you 've knowledge of such work or no, look if ever you saw painted wind that could be felt as it blows there. Turn it full to the light, John Ballantyne; Miss Lacy must see well."

As she spoke she had drawn Marion toward the corner, and Mr. Ballantyne, turning from the friend with whom he had been in close talk, bowed quietly and took down the drawing. It held the gnarled and laboring branches of an ancient oak, bowed hedgerows, and fields of corn beyond; every blade distinct and straightened out in the wind that whirled across this open country. Above it the moon rode high; not quailing nor flickering as one would fancy she must before such a gale, but the fire in her crescent, a white triumphal light above cloud and blast. Why this steady light above the cloud should carry such sense of storm and passion; why, indeed, the narrow boundary of the drawing could ever have been made to hold it, Marion could not comprehend, but she felt the power that had wrought in every line, and Miss Ryde nodded, well satisfied as she saw the delight in her face.

"There 's your answer, Beresford," she said. "There 's naught on earth you won't question, but you owe it to a man who worked out his honest thought without a stain of falsehood from beginning to end, not to deny what his own hand did, even for a good joke against an old woman."

Mr. Beresford sprang up and bowed low before her.

"Madam," he said, with a sudden change of tone,

"we are too old friends not to understand each other. You can never honor William Blake more than I do. Nothing is cheaper or easier than funeral speeches, but this drawing would give his quality if not another line were left on the earth."

Miss Ryde looked at him with a smile.

"You've an Irish tongue, Beresford," she said, "and you do what you choose with it. For the most part I find no fault with its uses;" and she moved away with him to the sofa, where, conscience-stricken for having so played on her feelings, he devoted himself to still further placating her. Jane, who had some time before lighted the lamp under the beautiful kettle on a little table near Miss Ryde, entered now with hot buttered tea-cakes, which followed each other in relays, accompanied by Devonshire cream, and a rich jam made apparently of several fruits, which Miss Ryde announced as also Devonshire.

"I dine early on Sunday," she said to Marion, "and I am opposed to early supper, so those who come to me must satisfy themselves as they can. Mr. Ballantyne will take care of you, and you are to look at his teacup as well as your own, for they are some of the first Royal Worcester, and none but I and Jane ever handle one of them."

"You must look at everything," Mr. Ballantyne said, as he made place for her in the corner. "It is a distracting but delightful prospect, though for myself I think I prefer this end of the room to any other, for Blake has always fascinated me. These drawings

need strong daylight, however, and it is hardly fair to begin with them in this mixture of twilight and candle-light."

Marion's eyes had wandered from them to the river, still plain to see in the soft, lingering English twilight, boats passing now and then soundlessly, and only an occasional voice breaking the silence of the silent English Sunday. Then she turned back to her tea-cake, eating it with critical enjoyment, as well as her portion of the curious conserve, which had half a dozen flavors, blending in one peculiar, desirable, and yet quite undefinable one.

"It is like the room," she said at last as Mr. Ballantyne, who had been watching her while he chatted on, asked:

"What is the result of the investigation?"

"It must have begun in the West Indies, I think," Marion answered. "I have had something like it at my grandfather's in Nantucket."

"Ha!" said Miss Ryde, who had bent forward and caught her words. "What creatures these Americans are! They eat everything and remember everything. You are perfectly right. It is West Indian, and my grandfather had the rule from a daughter who married and went to Jamaica, and the old housekeeper made it from her directions, just the same, only with, of course, English fruits. There is rum in it, among many other things, but none to do harm. You may have more, John Ballantyne, if you wish."

"Next Sunday," he said, as Miss Ryde herself brought the dish of jam. "It is only for Sundays. Do you see the dish, Miss Lacy? It is only a bubble that has consented not to break. I have never seen you use that before, Miss Ryde."

"No, but I am taking the cabinets in turn, and I mean that each thing in them shall have its use before I am done with them," his hostess made answer, holding the exquisite thing against the light. "If they break, it is one less trouble for my heirs; but they don't break. Now, Miss Lacy, it is your turn. I have been put off long enough by one and another;" and Marion, who had seen in the young man's eyes a sudden astonished and intent look as she said the words "my grandfather in Nantucket," found herself on the great sofa, and facing Miss Ryde in a new character, that of the hostess, serenely happy in dispensing her hospitality, and enjoying knowing how to bring and hold together people of most varying opinions and convictions.

"Now I will tell you who they all are," she said. "You will get to know them better if you take it gradually, as you will, if you come here often."

"Just as often as you will let me," Marion said. "It is the most charming old room I ever saw. Room and people are delightful alike. You are very good to let me come."

"Sometimes they are delightful, and sometimes they are not," said Miss Ryde, with a grim look toward the stout lady who still held Mr. Norris at

her side. "People ought to come together with no personal ends to serve, and only general comfort in view. But you can't manage a drawing-room as you manage a lecture-room. I take my Clubs through the week, but I don't want to be pinned to any one man's expounding on Sunday, and there comes in the one difficulty with convictions. Nobody ever can have as much of Norris as they wish, because Madame Bogavsky is bent upon converting him to Theosophy. Those three people by the tall cabinet in the corner are all Theosophists, — an artist, an author, and a member of Parliament, — who might be in better business. What people want of a religion whose heaven is distinctly more disagreeable than a well-regulated hell I can't see, but I don't doubt she will explain it all to you, and it is worth while to listen a bit, if only to feel your privileges in not being a chela or any of the other things, and forced to concentrate ten years maybe on the pit of your own stomach.

"This is all it is worth while saying about them," she went on after a pause of indignation. "That little lady with the pretty voice and mild eyes is the editor of an Anarchist paper, and would blow both my house and me up in a minute for the good of society; and the big man she 's talking with is Lord Dalrymple, Conservative member from Boston — not yours, but ours. That tallest man by the middle window is my cousin, Lord Herbert Hetherington, who has the old place, and is the apostle of what he calls 'individualism;' and the lady near him has ex-

plained him in a book, and is a woman of sense in spite of it. The other one, that short, dark man distracted by his eyeglass, — and he deserves to be, for why were we born with two eyes, if not to use them? — is young Dyce, the editor of a 'series' of some sort. Everything is a 'series' now. He came out of the North somewhere, and is deep in love with Eleanor there, who cares more for his series than for him. The rest are a mixture. They all come and go; some because they like my house, and the people they meet; one or two because they are old friends, and we are loyal to each other, and should ill bear missing a look at each other's faces; and the rest I measure and sift, and get rid of if necessary."

"And Mr. Ballantyne?" Marion said after a little pause in which she waited, wondering if his name would come next. She had colored slightly as she spoke, but Miss Ryde, whose eyes were fixed on Eleanor Norris's face, alive now with mischief as she talked with Mr. Beresford, did not notice it.

"Ah, he is one of the old ones," she said, "though not of the oldest. He was with young Herbert Hetherington at Oxford, and kept him in a straight track when no other mortal ever could, and for that alone he would be friend to all of us. When he leaves us, for leave he will some day, — though that means that his mother must die first, for he cannot till she is gone, — there will be no one to take his place, and so, in spite of the longing that is in him, I cannot but wish her long life. It will not be hers,

though. She holds on with a will, but it can't last, and then he will be free."

"That is a strange word," Marion said, "for the death of one nearest him."

"Ah, but you do not understand," began Miss Ryde, and then checked herself. "I 'll tell you some day," she said. "Now I have had you longer than is my right, and there is Eleanor shaking her head at me. Tell that young Dyce I want him, you gypsy, and then go off with your prize in what corner you will."

"We must go altogether very soon, indeed," said Miss Norris, "but we can talk a little first. I want you to promise to come to us, Miss Lacy, for till you do, there will never really be time to talk to you as I wish. When I come up, it is always with some specific thing to do, except these Sunday evenings, which have belonged to Miss Ryde as long as I can remember. She and my father were children together. I want you to understand all that we are doing — all that we are hoping for. Mr. Ballantyne is coming down on Wednesday, to dine and talk over the new scheme of young Herbert Hetherington's, and I wonder if you would not come at the same time? You will, I am sure, and we will put you up for the night. Mr. Ballantyne, I have a plan," she went on, as he turned from Mr. Hetherington and came toward her. "I have begged Miss Lacy to come down on Wednesday, and she is so good as to say she will."

"Then perhaps Miss Lacy will allow me to be her guide again?" he said, quickly.

"With pleasure," Marion replied, as he sat down by her with the same eager look in his eyes.

"Tell me, please," he said, as Miss Norris rose suddenly to speak to some one who was passing out. "You are an American, are you not? I supposed you English till that word of yours. Is it possible that you are from Nantucket?"

"Not I, but my father," Marion answered. "I was born in Boston, but my father was the son of Grantham Lacy, — old Captain Lacy of Nantucket, — and was born there."

"And my father was the son of Captain John Ballantyne, your grandfather's cousin from New Bedford, and my mother was born in Nantucket."

"Ah!" said Marion, involuntarily. "It was a John, then, that came to shore, just as old Friend Barstow hoped."

"Yes," he said, with an astonished look. "I am the sixth John Ballantyne for America."

"And an American! I do not know how to believe it."

"Yes, thank God, I am American!" said John Ballantyne, with a little motion as if there were hat to doff at the name. "I seem English, I suppose, because my life has been lived here, but I am held here by circumstance. I will tell you, when we go together, if I may. But I am an American indeed; — an American to the finest fibre in me, and with

Lacy blood in your veins you can be no less so."

"On the contrary," said Marion, after a breathless pause in which she longed to be silent, but felt she must not be, "I do not love America. There have been times when I have even loathed it. It means to me some of the worst things in modern life. I am heartily and devotedly English in my feeling."

As Marion spoke the fervor in Ballantyne's face gave place to amazement, and then a deep pity looked from his eyes, mingled with a little indignation.

"You are like one or two others that I have seen," he said. "You do not understand. You —"

"John Ballantyne! You said you were to go down to Badgeley to-night, and a cab is at the door," called Miss Ryde suddenly from the doorway; and with a hasty, "This must wait, but I shall come for you on Wednesday," he bowed and hurried away.

Chapter Seventh

"WHAT have you been doing?" Miss Ryde asked suspiciously, looking from the Embankment down to the landing and the little boat from which Marion was just stepping, still smiling and waving her hand to the grizzled old sailor, a Chelsea pensioner, who touched his cap, and looked at her admiringly as she went up the stairs. "Have you let that old reprobate fill your head with his fabrications, and how dare you go on the river alone?"

"Nothing could be truer than his tales," said Marion, who was finding that calm opposition was the best method of meeting Miss Ryde's aggressive side. "The river rests and stimulates me at once. I have always rowed at home."

"You want no rest save your natural sleep, nor stimulus, save thankfulness that you are alive," said Miss Ryde, decisively. "What has a child like you to do with words that belong to battered middle life? They are for me and not for you, though I admit you Americans live so fast that you are old in your youth. I would go over to see what a nation of you must be like, if I did not think that among you I should be

driven into lunacy. That is not what I wish to talk about, however. I am just come from Mrs. Pattle's, who said you were out, and I went there to tell you that I would go down to Hammersmith with you, since a telegram has come from John Ballantyne, to say that his mother is too ill to leave. All his movements wait on hers. Shall I go?"

"No, thanks; it will alter all your plans," Marion said. "I am to stay, you know, and I shall like the excitement of finding the place."

"Rest, stimulus, excitement," Miss Ryde said. "This generation lives for sensation solely. I am seeking to see why."

"And in the process finding a number for personal use," said Marion with a laugh, and as Miss Ryde turned toward her own house, ran in and up to her room. A duplicate of Miss Ryde's dispatch lay on her table, and she picked it up and stood for a moment after she had read it, smiling at her own keen disappointment.

"Fate has the matter in charge," she thought. "I wanted to hear the whole story, but, after all, practically I know it all, since he is certainly John Ballantyne, and that was the chief puzzle. On the whole I wish he were not. To find a delightful Englishman only a rather extraordinary American is a disappointment to which I am unreconciled and shall be. All the same I want the story. Now away with any more unreasonableness! Oh, for invention, and all benign gods that watch over crude aspiration!" and

Marion lifted the cloth from her clay and soon was absorbed in work.

Hammersmith was an unknown country, but she looked it up in her Bradshaw, found the right train, and at five o'clock entered the station at one door as Mr. Beresford and young Hetherington appeared at another. Mr. Beresford came over to her with the quick, even jaunty, cheerfulness that characterized step as well as look and voice, and in a moment had taken her as thoroughly in charge as even Miss Ryde could have done.

Hetherington seconded him as if he would gladly be less impassive if he could, and Marion as opportunity came studied his face, wondering where the propensity for high betting and other evil ways came in. He was tall and bulky already; a genuine country squire, with Miss Ryde's very face, minus her alertness, his chief attraction being a slow, sweet smile that lightened his heaviness, and gave a glimpse of something that might be in permanent residence below this unresponsive surface. Evidently he admired Mr. Beresford immensely, listening to each word as if it were an oracle, and no less evidently he admired Marion, who, accustomed to the adoration of Tom's classmates, took this undemonstrative form quite unconsciously.

"What is there in Hammersmith besides the Norrises?" she asked, as the stifling little underground journey, delayed by some accident, ended, and they emerged from the station into daylight.

"Nothing but a few thousand everyday people, mostly Philistines, who are doing their best to make the world a cockney nightmare; a state of things which Norris is fighting as heartily as Carlyle did, and with about the same success," returned her companion. "Norris is here because of the works that need his supervision. He is the salt in the meal. You know he chooses to manufacture as well as make verses."

"Yes, I know it," Marion said, "and wonder at it, too, since he inveighs against any life of the town. I heard him Sunday evening accusing Miss Ryde of no desire beyond a grimy palace amid the smoke, with a regiment of housemaids always working to smear the dirt together so that it would be unnoticed."

"He is right," said Mr. Beresford. "London is the apotheosis of soot. English smoke and soot are killing any English sense of color. Fog and fume without must mean fog and fume within. It is a fact that France is far ahead of us. We have technical education enough for accuracy of form, but any perception of gradation or subtle contrast in color is impossible. That is how it comes that aniline dyes, false and hard, are better liked than the tender tinting of nature. Norris is right to protest, as the master Ruskin did long ago. The elder art is dead, quite dead. As to the new, Norris has already said that it has the hands of a child and the heart of a troubled man, and what its course will be no man can yet know. Here is the house at last. You will find

it charming within, whatever lack there may be without."

Certainly it was at that moment most charming without. Eleanor Norris in a gown of some soft white stuff, floating about her, stood in the dark doorway, and stretched her hands to Marion.

"We had quite given you up," she said. "It is so late, and I stole down just to see with my own eyes if there was by chance any fog. I am so glad you are here. Where is Mr. Ballantyne, Herbert?"

"The mater, again, I suppose," Mr. Hetherington said in his slow drawl, and Marion hastened to explain.

"You will find we are a sort of family party," Eleanor said, as she led Marion to her room, to which a servant had already taken her portmanteau. "In spite of the strangers that come and go, there is always a nucleus of our own people. My father is uneasy without at least one familiar face in a company, and I share his feeling. He will be specially disappointed to-night because John Ballantyne is hindered from coming, and this grand scheme of Herbert's must wait discussion. Do you need a maid? I have none but a girl who began as maid, but has talent, and is being taught designing. She is the third that has gone that way, among our servants, but then they were not of that order after all. Mamma has experimented with 'lady help.' We experiment in everything. Now come, you beautiful thing, you! You shall be drawn as the Viking's daughter. How

is it that you seem that, when, after all, you are little?"

Marion started as Tom's words repeated themselves.

"There must be something Norse and fierce in my aspect," she said as they descended the stairway, of heavy oak, looking about as she went. Nothing could be in greater contrast to Miss Ryde's overflowing house than this, in which the simplicity would have seemed almost bare, but for richness and harmony of coloring, and the most perfect material. A vivacious little lady stood near the chimney-piece in the drawing-room, clad in a sad-colored plush gown, from which her eager little head rose, its loose curls those of child rather than matron, and her whole alert figure a protest against the heavy draping she elected for it.

"I am delighted," she said, as she crossed the room, both hands extended. "I have been so eager for Wednesday to come."

"I did not know it was to be a formal evening," said Marion. "I thought it was to be quite a family affair, and that you would be alone."

"We are never alone," Mrs. Norris answered. "Some one is always being brought home, so that when I plan for a certain number of guests, I always allow one or two more places, for Philip will begin a discussion with anybody, from a duke to a bargeman, and as he never stops till the moment in which he must rush for the train, he ends with saying, 'Come and we will finish it at dinner.' I hear his

step now. It is always our conundrum,—'Who will be with him to-day?'"

"Whoever it is, you are always just as much interested as he, and make them delightfully at home," said Eleanor, moving in her quick, graceful fashion across the room, and to the door, where, a moment later, Mr. Norris entered, followed by a young fellow with cheeks still flushed from hot debate.

"Ah, Paget!" Mr. Beresford cried, with a rush across the room. "I thought you were off to the Continent."

"My luggage is," said the young man, with a laugh; "but Norris haled me away for a final and satisfactory row over art in general, and here I am, pelted with abuse all the way down, and wondering why I submitted."

"You submitted because under those layers of what you call artistic sense, there is still a gleam of soul," said Mr. Norris, who had put out his hand to Eleanor, and stood there smiling at wife and daughter, but still bent upon carrying his point.

"To end a day of hard work with a callant like that!" he went on. "Ideas! yes, but not a correct one among the lot, and his whole business to learn over again, if he would leave after him a picture worth hanging."

"It is the old story," Eleanor began; but dinner was at this moment announced, and they passed informally into the dining-room. It proved a battle royal, from which each side emerged smiling and

confident it had won. The courses came and went; not many, for the simplicity of furnishing extended also to the menu, but all delicately cooked and served, though in this war of words Marion wondered if any one had really dined, or knew the flavor of a dish.

"It 's the Scotch streak in Norris that makes him so pugnacious," said Mr. Beresford confidentially, as they finally rose. "At first I never knew what I had eaten, and had frightful indigestions. Now I take a hand in when necessary, but dine calmly; and we all learn to do it, you know. After all, you see, Norris is right. He is the prophet of a high simplicity."

"Define it," said Marion. "I wish to understand."

"No. You are making game of us all; quite quietly but delightedly. I see it," said Mr. Beresford, shaking his fiery locks. "After all, each means practically the same thing. The Nineteenth, the century of commerce, the destruction of the art spirit. The Twentieth, the century of education, and a revival of what is now dead and buried."

"But that is atrocious," said Marion. "Admitting that the art spirit is dead, in any such sense as ruled among the old Greeks, it is an insult to many a name of to-day to hoot in such fashion at modern art."

"You among the Philistines!" said Mr. Beresford dejectedly, but with a twinkle in his eyes.

Mr. Norris crossed the room, and stood with his coffee-cup beside her.

"I am not," said Marion, decisively. "I never

was, and never shall be. But this cry that we have no art spirit seems irrational. Look at our great museums."

"Yes, look at them," said her host. "Is there anything more melancholy, when you consider what a tale of abominable violence, of shameful carelessness, of lawless destruction, every one of these treasured scraps might tell. A museum is simply the unconsciously erected monument to the results of some of the worst passions of man."

"Then you would scatter these scraps, as you call them?" Marion said.

"No; because the mischief is done, and we must hold to such memorials as there are of a dead beauty. Art and the arts have sunk lower and lower, till even cultivated men have less and less conception of what they mean. Take London itself with all its possibilities; — seventy years ago, as sunny a city as England owned. Now you have on the one hand squalor, on the other, blank uncompromising ugliness, all alike dominated by smoke; all alike decorated by this foul flying soot, that is part of the first breath of the newborn babe, and makes harder the last gasp of the dying. Till the people are roused again to a consciousness of what art means, it must be always worse and not better, till at last, maybe, we shall wipe the slate quite clean and begin again."

"In the meantime I shall hie me to Paris to the latest abominations," said young Paget, who had listened seriously as he stood in the background, but

came forward now with a laugh. "I shall be back in time to give you some fresh material for your fury. Good night, and *auf wiedersehen*. I am late."

He hurried out with a hasty, "Ah, Ballantyne. There you are, after all," and Marion looked up to see John Ballantyne entering the room. Herbert Hetherington's impassive face brightened as he said:

"Good, John! We shall have the settlement after all."

"Come away before another battle begins," said Mr. Beresford. "The ladies will pardon us for a little. The papers are all in the library, John."

Mr. Norris, with rather a longing look toward the group near the window, followed his energetic lead and disappeared behind the great oaken doors, beckoning to Ballantyne, who paused only for a moment's greeting, and to explain that his mother had become better, and insisted upon his keeping his engagement.

"We could go, too," said Mrs. Norris, "but I think we shall be happier here. I want to hear my own voice a little, to say nothing of yours, Miss Lacy, and I am sure there will be great repose in letting squabbling go for a few minutes."

"Poor little mamma!" said Eleanor, pityingly. "What would you do in the House of Commons?"

"I do not even wish to think," said Mrs. Norris, with a shake of her head. "You are all discussing the nature of the century. I insist that it is a century of words. Now and then somebody does a spasmodic deed, usually the wrong one, but as a rule

nobody has time for anything but talking about them. It is all foam."

"The foam of yeast," said Eleanor. "All this is leaven for our bread to be. If there had been no words, Herbert would never have been stirred up to his thought for these factory people, and John Ballantyne would not be in the library settling the way. Do you want to know about it?" she asked, turning to Marion, whose eyes had held the unspoken question. "You do, I see. The Ballantynes have a house at Badgeley-on-Thames; a delicious old place where artists go, and about which I could tell a most wonderful tale. It is quite apart from the town which is stretching out to it, and where there are manufactories of all orders, one of which, on the outskirts, belongs to Herbert. It is so far out that the operatives are almost in Badgeley, and living in such wretched ways that John Ballantyne found the sight of it intolerable. It has taken a long time to convince Herbert, who is slow; but now he means not only to have a model village, with some beauty in it, but profit-sharing and humanizing of things generally. Papa has drawn some of the sketches, and Mr. Beresford, who is an architect, you know, is to see if they are really working plans, and altogether they are settling to-night just how to begin, and where."

"If they do not get into another discussion," said Mrs. Norris, plaintively, "and spend the rest of the night at that."

"Then they will all emerge wiser than when they began," said Eleanor. "You don't properly appreciate your opportunities, mamma. You need soothing, and you shall have it. I will play till the spirit of Silence and Peace descends and broods over the entire house, and everybody becomes of one mind."

Mrs. Norris leaned her head against the high-chair and closed her eyes contentedly as the first notes of the Moonlight Sonata sounded. Marion, who had shared her restlessness, listened with delight as the music flowed on, the exquisite quality of touch and feeling giving new charm to the familiar friend.

"Oh, go on," she begged, as a pause came, and Eleanor went on, weaving snatches of half-remembered themes into one scheme, liquid and flowing as a brook. The doors opened softly after a time, and Ballantyne entered and took his place silently in a corner, followed soon by the others, who came as silently. Peace had descended as Eleanor willed, and for a little while questions ceased, doubt fled away, and all good became possible and attainable.

"You must promise me to play for the grand inauguration, — the opening of the Hall, you know," young Hetherington said, as she rose at last and went over to the window. "You half promised when it was first talked about. To-night settles it all, and next week we break ground."

"Anything you like, if it is really to begin," said Eleanor. "It began to seem to me as if it were just one of the dreams."

"You will never admit that I mean anything," said the young man, a little sulkily; and Marion, who saw an impending quarrel, turned to Ballantyne, who had crossed the room and sat down by her.

"I have a favor to ask," he said. "I have told my mother about you, and she is very eager to see you. She is a great invalid, you know, and cannot come to you. Will you go down with me to-morrow morning for a day or two? She wishes much to talk with you. She has seen no Americans in years."

"I will go, certainly," said Marion, "if you are sure she is well enough to see a stranger."

"You are not a stranger, as you will soon find," he said, after a moment. "She knew your father well, but we have seen no old friends in many years. She has not wished it till now. In fact, she has refused it altogether, and this wish is so new that I want you to gratify it, even if it include some cost to yourself. I am only fearful that it may intensify her feeling, but that must be as it may."

"What feeling?" asked Marion, with a little wonder in her tone; but as she spoke Mr. Beresford came toward them, and the evening ended with no further opportunity for question. Marion puzzled a little as to why they had lived in England all these years, and why, if her father was so well known, there had been no communication with him, and fell asleep at last, with an odd feeling of responsibility and guilt, born of the veiled reproach and question in John Ballantyne's eyes.

Chapter Eighth

IF latent reproach had seemed the expression of the previous evening, something more puzzling took its place as they neared Badgeley. They had breakfasted together early, since Mr. Norris went to business as regularly as if that and not poetry were his calling, and Marion had driven to Cheyne Walk, to charge Polly to keep her clay wet, and then in hot haste to Paddington. Their talk had been a continuation of that begun at the breakfast table, as to what share beauty had or must have in the every-day working life, and passed on to many things born of the same thought.

"He means to attack me about America," Marion thought, as they took the train down, and prepared to defend her standpoint, rather resenting his silence as they went on. She looked at him curiously, wondering how his feeling had grown, or why any one in the midst of this fair English landscape, with its atmosphere of abounding prosperity and well-being, could turn to the America she knew, as a land better worth loving and living for.

"London? Yes, London, it is true, holds all misery; but London is not England. This is the

real England," she thought. As if to answer it, John Ballantyne began to tell her of the life in the little towns through which they passed, and she listened and looked, and declared that in such surroundings, real suffering, save that born of wilful improvidence or crime, was forever impossible. At intervals as they talked, Marion, as she turned from the window, found his eyes fixed on her with a look so wistful that she became lost in wonder as to its meaning, and at last even tempted to ask.

"One would say he had something he wished to ask and knew he must not," she thought. "It is like the story of some enchanted prince who cannot speak till the right moment comes. It is certainly something more than my iniquitous views about America. He looks as if he were a judge with power of life and death, and yet it is all quite impersonal. I wish I dared ask, but I certainly do not."

Why she did not was hardly less puzzling than the look, since to her frank simplicity most questions were easy. But with this wistfulness she felt another quality,— a reserve that made a personal question altogether impossible, — and she put away the wish. The sense of expectancy which had been the underlying element in all this new life deepened. With it came a conviction that new and sharp experience was near, and as they drove through the old street, one of the oldest and most picturesque she had seen in England, she strove in vain to pay attention to her

companion's words as he pointed out the artists' favorite bits.

They had passed an old Norman church, set in softly rolling meadows, with here and there a group of trees, the river winding through them, and at the north the chalk hills of Oxfordshire, with their growth of larch and beech. At the left rose a great manor-house with spreading wings and Elizabethan front, with deep woods at the back, above which rose the smoke of the omnipresent factory, less intrusive here than in the towns through which they had passed, but still making its place evident. But as they crossed the little bridge over the broad brook flowing peacefully toward the Thames, paying the heavy toll demanded by a blear-eyed old man who appeared to rise suddenly out of the ground, the last trace of modern life was left behind.

The old street was lined with low brick and stucco houses, thatch-roofed, moss-grown, vine-covered, and had been the old street in the days when Elizabeth herself passed through it. No less ancient was the inn by the river, and the houses that farther on took the place of the cottages, though larger, were of the same order. With each and all time, wind, and weather had worked their will, but every rent or fissure of the trio nature had hastened to take in charge and make good; a patch of lichen here, a mat of thick-growing ivy there, and all soft tones of velvety browns and greens, charming and soothing the eyes that rested on them.

"Our house is big, but only a magnified cottage after all. Here it is, and I hope you are not very tired," Ballantyne said, as he turned off from the street, which broadened here into a little common over which some geese walked peacefully. A boy opened the door, showing a broad entrance hall, low-ceiled, and with an oaken stairway black with age at the end. In the background stood a middle-aged woman who came forward at once.

"This is Mrs. Price, the housekeeper," said Ballantyne, "and she will show you your room."

"I 'm to take you there at once, and Mrs. Ballantyne will see you as soon as you are ready, Miss Lacy," she said, with a curtsey and a pleased look at Marion's face. "Mr. John wired down before you left, and Mrs. Ballantyne is very anxious to see you."

"I shall be quite ready in a moment or two," Marion said, following her guide up the stairs, with their thick and soundless rivulet of carpet in the centre, to a room sweet with the scent of apple blossoms blown through the open window. She threw off her hat, stopping only for a glance into the old garden, on the wall of which a tame jackdaw was walking up and down, cocking his head to one side, and calling loudly, to the intense aggravation of a small spaniel which barked below. A tap came at the door as she turned, and a quiet, elderly woman appeared.

"It is Price, Mrs. Ballantyne's own maid and my

sister-in-law," said the housekeeper, as if to explain the similarity of name. "It is almost one family, for my daughter is parlor maid, and my sister the cook; but Mrs. Ballantyne likes it so. Will you go in now, Miss Lacy?"

Marion followed silently through various passages, each closed by double doors. Soundlessness seemed the demand everywhere. The house was even breathlessly quiet, the thick carpets giving back no echo of footfall; and when Price opened first one door and then another, and lifted a heavy portière, Marion felt that only a dungeon deep below ground could meet the need implied in such precautions.

The flood of light in the room, or what seemed so by contrast with the shadowy way thither, amazed her. The wing built out into the old garden had latticed windows on all sides thrown wide to the sun, which at that moment was shining with most un-English brilliancy, sifting through the apple leaves and blossoms of the tree whose branches were close against the southern windows, and making an illuminated background for the figure that lay there, shrouded in white drapery, on the great sofa drawn close to them. Marion paused suddenly and stood quite silent.

"It is the spirit of the snow," she thought, the white hair lying loose about the brow, the face as white, the mass of snowy drapery all strengthening the fancy, and only the clear, sorrowful eyes giving any sense of life or color.

"I am quite alive," a voice hardly more than a

whisper said, a shadowy smile crossing the face. "Come closer, and you will believe it then."

She put out a hand transparent and unreal as all the rest, and Marion took it and sat down beside her, smiling as she met the intense, inquiring look, but too much under the spell for any words.

"That will do, Price," Mrs. Ballantyne said. "I will ring for you when you are needed. I shall not want anything for a long time."

Price lingered for a moment as if a little uncertain what Marion's course might be, and looked back doubtfully as she left the room.

"I am only a ghost, I know," Mrs. Ballantyne said then, "but if you look at me like that I shall feel that I have not even a ghost's right among the living."

"Forgive me," Marion said, with sudden self-reproach. "It seemed as if a breath would blow you quite away, but your hand is warm; you are not a snow-wreath, though you look like one."

"You are a true Lacy," Mrs. Ballantyne said, after a silence in which she had made no reply, but held fast to Marion's warm young hand as if strength were flowing from it to her. "I can see your grandfather's face, and your father's as well, though his eyes and yours came from his mother. Do you know why I ventured to send for you? It is not as if you were a stranger. That you cannot be, for I was your father's first fancy. Only a fancy. I was just engaged then, and he did not know it, but we were

always better instead of worse friends afterward. You are wondering why you have never seen nor heard of us in all these years, and you have the right. You will understand when I have told you a little. You will not mind?"

"No," Marion said.

"Then I will tell you now — at once — all I can. Each attack leaves me a little nearer the end. It must be very soon now. When John told me of you and what you had said, for he tells me everything, so that I may still feel that I have some place in life, I knew that you could help; that you had been sent. You must help. Your father would wish it."

"I will surely, if I can," said Marion, after a pause in which the eyes seemed to search her through and through.

"I know it," the faint voice went on. "It may seem selfish, perhaps, but I am not selfish, I think. It is not for myself I have chosen this life, but because insight was given me, and I knew better things were for us here than in America. At first I have to grant it must have been selfishness. To think even of the sea, meant a terror so deadly that nerves quivered and blood froze. And John shared it then. He will not speak of it, and after that night in which he promised me never to cross it while I lived, we said no more, for there was no more need.

"I came here at once. There were friends who told us of it, and here I have lived in all his years at

school and at Oxford. Not the wreck you see me now, but alive and eager as he, though always with that horror of the past in the background. I know that you know it, and I shall not talk of it. I loved this life. It has all the repose and settledness that American life has never known and never can know. It has always seemed natural, and as if I had returned to my own. There was never any sense of caste or dividing lines, for Americans are not judged by that standard, and I have lived here year after year, content save for my one terror. I knew that John would be true to his promise, but as he grew, more and more he remembered and brooded and longed for what he called freer life. I have been careful never to urge this one upon him, since in any case he was pledged to it; but each year it has been my anguish to see that he revolted more and more, and, no matter what work opened to him, could never be content. He said often till the time came that he ceased to speak of it, that sorrow and terror had warped my judgment, and that if I could once force myself to cross the sea, all would be different. When he was twenty-one he implored me to release him from his promise.

"'It is all wrong,' he said. 'I a man, alien here and homesick, and longing for my real place. You must release me.' 'I cannot, I must not,' I said. 'It is death for both of us to cross that sea again. Be content with your place here. You have everything but that one thing, that you will. Put away the

thought once for all.' He had no answer, but I knew he did not.

"I had avoided Americans always. It was easy here, but when we went up to London difficult, for they are everywhere. John sought them out; talked with them; puzzled over the different orders; wondered why so few comprehended their birthright,— and I listened to him, because I would not have him feel I could not. He sent for photographs of every spot he remembered as a child. He studied American history with a sort of passion. He knows every family tradition; every characteristic of each member of it remaining. I had begun to despair. I knew his one wish was for release, and I could not release him. And now my aid has come."

She stopped and lifted herself on the pillows, still holding Marion's hand firmly.

"My heart leaped up when he told me of your face, and that you had left America because you loathed it. You had mind. You knew what words meant, and could tell him. I saw then the one thing that may help to hold him here, where he belongs: yes, belongs, for every nerve of my body and power of my soul have gone into this soil, this home, and woven bands to hold him here. It is death that waits for him if he forsakes it. Now will you help me?"

"How?" said Marion, faintly. It seemed as if a conspiracy were forming; an unholy compact waiting her signature.

"Make him see what I see," the low voice went

on. "You will know him well; better, I think, than any one has known him except myself. I am sure of this, for many things are made plain to me now. Help me to keep him on this side of the sea. Promise me that you will use whatever power you may have to this end. Promise me."

"I cannot!" cried Marion, with a sudden gasp as if a cold hand had closed about her throat. "I cannot. What right have I to touch his life?"

"Your right is coming in knowledge of him. You will have. You will have."

"Then I must wait. I will not fight destiny nor anticipate it. I must not."

"Promise me only, then, that you will be on my side. That you will make him see how poor a thing it is he worships."

"That I can promise," Marion said, after a pause in which she strove to collect herself.

"I shall trust you; and now that is all," Mrs. Ballantyne said, with a sudden change of tone. "I shall not speak of it again. It is you who must forgive me now. But all this had to be said in our beginning. Are you willing to put it all away and stay with me for a little?"

The strained, eager look had gone. The sweet, shadowy smile flitted over the face as she patted Marion's cheek, and then put out her hand to the jackdaw, which had been looking in inquiringly from the apple-tree, and now with sudden flirts of tail and much cocking of head to one side and another, advanced by

short flights and hops till he attained the sofa. Here, standing on the head, he took a curl of the white hair in his beak as if for caress, and then proceeded to pull bits of wool from the fluffy Shetland shawl thrown over her. Marion's eyes had filled with tears from the sharp tension of feeling, and a sense even of resentment that such a burden had been laid upon her.

"It is purest monomania," she thought. "And all must bend to her will. It is frightful that any man should be forced to renounce his freedom for such a cause. She would bind every one near her by a sort of spell. It is either lunacy or the purest, most refined selfishness, and some day I shall tell her so."

She rose and went to the window for a moment, burying her face in the apple blossoms; a breath it seemed from the sturdy, wind-beaten trees in grandfather's garden at Nantucket.

"It 's all right, my pet," she seemed to hear him say. "It 's all right;" and with a sudden uplifting of spirit she turned back to the couch, and sat there listening to the talk in which Jacko took an almost human share. As she sat, the impression of the first hour wore away. Interests of every order had their place here. The talk was full of charm, nor had it a trace of morbidity. Mrs. Ballantyne laughed now and then; the shadow of a laugh, it is true, but as sweet as her smile, and one needed not to ask how or why she had such power with her son.

"It is lunch time," she said presently, "and I will

ring for Price to take you down. You will find Mrs. Earnshaw in the dining-room, — the rector's wife, and one of the dearest and most valued of our neighbors. She takes my place for me sometimes when I am unable to go down, but that is not so often as you think. By to-morrow, perhaps, or certainly next day, I shall be in my own place."

She had touched the bell as she spoke, and Price appeared, casting an inquiring look at Marion, and apparently satisfied with the result. A look of even greater relief was on Ballantyne's face as she descended the stairs slowly, looking at the carved rail and meeting his eyes with a smile.

"It is a fascinating house," she said, "only a trifle uncanny, it is so absolutely soundless. The walls seem thick as those of any old castle."

"That is a peculiarity of Badgeley houses," he said. "Mrs. Earnshaw will tell you that the rectory walls are even thicker than ours, and the manor-house than either. Mrs. Earnshaw, this is Miss Lacy, American, and partly a cousin, but so nearly Anglicized she rejects the name."

"It is much the same, after all," said the stout matron, who came forward with a face beaming good will, shaking Marion's hand heartily, but with an inflection in her voice that said plainly, "It is not the same at all." "We have had our day of misunderstandings, and now you are all coming home again. I hope you are hungry, my dear," she added, with a look at Marion's cheek, still pale from excitement.

"All you Americans lack color a little, but really you look more English than American, and John, here, is right. We can claim you, and we shall."

"I wish Horatia were here to help," said their host; "but you have not a daughter left. Imagine, Miss Lacy; seven daughters, and every one married!"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Earnshaw, as if this were quite the usual order in households of English daughters, and turning toward the dining-room. "I will not say I did not expect it, for why should I? Good girls, every one of them, each one prettier than the last, and with plenty of common sense. What else could happen? Now, my mind is quite free for the rest of the parish. Indeed it always was so, my dear, for I never worried over the girls. It was true love matches I wanted for them, like my own, and no other; and, thank God, every one was that. It 's only when money and place come first that love can't get in, and I 've no room in my plan for such ways with life. 'T would have been the same with a son, that I never had. John, here, comes nearest to it. I 've a free mind for all in my way now, and indeed all come into it sooner or later."

"Naturally," Marion said with a little smile, that completed the conquest already begun. Mrs. Earnshaw looked at her radiantly, as she rambled on through lunch, which Marion to her surprise found herself enjoying, and when it ended, led her to the west window, which looked out upon a little lawn,

across which one saw a garden and a low stone house.

"There is the rectory," Mrs. Earnshaw said, "where I was brought and set down thirty years ago, in terror of my life you might say, because of the Queen, and right through that gap in the hedge is how we come and go. Just beyond is Anastasia's, my third daughter, and a heavy name for a gay girl to carry. It's not her fault indeed, nor mine, but the Queen's, that would have her way with one, and Mr. Earnshaw felt I must submit. You must see the house. It was an oatmeal-mill next the cottage, and the store-chamber was just the thing for an artist who settled here in spite of the Queen, for Anastasia married one."

"But why should an artist be stored, and what has the Queen to do with it?" asked Marion, more and more bewildered at the complication that beset her.

Mrs. Earnshaw turned from the window and led her toward the drawing-room, laughing as she went. "My dear, I'm Irish," she said. "North of Ireland, with a dash of Scotch, and that's one reason the Queen sulked so long with Mr. Earnshaw, till she found I had no fear of her, and then she came to like it. But you haven't had time to find out that all Badgeley-on-Thames belongs to her, — this one woman that owns every stick and stone and soul and body from the minute you cross the bridge. Four hundred years she's had her way; what am I saying? though, indeed, there's a look about her that might

mean she 'd been here a thousand. But four hundred years this one family has ruled, and she, since she was seventeen, and now she 's ninety-three, with a back as straight as yours, and a tall stick like a fairy godmother and eyes like coals. There she lives in the manor-house, with a retinue about her, and folk kiss her hand, and get out of the room backwards, and what more has majesty? — and not a stone has been stirred nor a change made in the parish since she came to her throne seventy-six years gone, a slip of a girl seventeen years old, and my husband not born nor thought of. 'T was her father called her Queen of Badgeley, and people took it up, though I stick to Lady Anne, and will save for my daughter. Lady Anne Heathcote it is, and yon 's Heathcote Manor."

"This is delightful," said Marion. "And now tell me why you stored the artist. Would n't the Queen allow him in sight?"

"Not if she could have had her way, in spite of knowing well, if telling would do it, that he had talent and more, for it 's famous he 's getting. But she 's no room for them that work with their hands, save as she likes them to do her bidding and reverence, and there 's a tinge of that in Mr. Earnshaw even, bless him, that counts the Army and the Navy and the Church the only places for gentlemen, and bears just to admit that the Law has had one now and then. But Grantham Wallis would have Anastasia, and small blame to him, and we had the lease of the

cottage, and the oatmeal-mill with it, just to hinder bother, and he made the chamber into studio, and a bridge across to his own bedroom, and a door out, before ever the Queen took it in, that it was doing and done, and then, because of Anastasia, she said less than we looked for. You shall see it all, but now you must be tired, and I 'll leave you for a nap or a book, till five, and then John will bring you over for a cup of tea, and more tales that I see you 're ready for."

Chapter Ninth

BALLANTYNE turned as Mrs. Earnshaw's comfortable figure disappeared through the gap.

"There is an amendment to that," he said. "You look especially wide awake and not in the least ready for a nap. How would you like a turn on the river, and then as short an evening as you choose after dinner, since by that time you will be really tired?"

Marion's eyes lighted.

"The one thing that is best of all. May I row?"

"If you like."

"Then I will make ready for it. It was inspiration that made me put in my rowing dress, but I can never bear to be without it."

"Then you can really manage a boat?"

"Wait and see," said Marion with a laugh, as she ran up the stairs, reappearing speedily in the dark-blue boating costume, the looseness of which had outraged every feeling of its London maker.

"Let me do it all," she begged, as they came to the end of the little path leading by the old inn, whose upper casements overhung the river; and

Ballantyne, after a moment or two, decided she had spoken advisedly, and gave himself up to the enjoyment of watching her eager pleasure. For the time, every thought of the morning had dropped out of sight.

"You shall steer," she said, "till I make up my mind to resign the oars;" and then she pulled, with the long steady stroke learned long ago from grandfather, the color coming to her cheeks, and her eyes full of content. Here and there the river broadened slightly, a tiny alder-fringed bay, or a broad, still expanse. The sun, veiled only with delicate cloud, hardly more than a faint mist, shone warm and bright. Not a breeze stirred, and every blade of grass, every twig, was mirrored in the motionless water. Velvet turf swept to its very edge as they passed the pretty old houses. Then came a house-boat, still in winter canvas, and another on which workmen were putting the summer touches. Beyond was a sudden curve and a thicket of bushes and saplings, and as they rounded it Marion, who had turned once or twice, stopped and looked with delighted eyes at something beyond.

Out from a little inlet, swift and steady as if blown by unfelt wind, sailed a swan, looking as if the place far and near were his own; and as he sailed stately and still, out from some retreat in the reeds came his mate, slenderer and less noble, but with all his grace, and curved her neck over his whiteness, and laid her head along it and under it as if it meant refreshment.

They had sailed back to the inlet before Marion spoke.

"How gloriously white they are!" she said. "Do you remember Landor's word about them? 'White doves are always very white, indeed, and those great water birds, to which the angels by God's order have given the same pure appearance, feel a pleasure in possessing it.'"

Marion paused for a moment, the look of a reflective child on her face, and Ballantyne watched her attentively.

"There is a great deal to be said for the black ones, too," she went on suddenly, as if justice to the blacks were imperative. "Do you know that a black swan is really beautiful? I remember two at home. There are distinct advantages in being a black swan, and they are not shared by the white ones. In the first place, you see, the dust which makes the white ones look very dirty, shines like silver powder on the plumes of the black ones. Then the water which deadens the lustre of the white plumage, only makes the other more satiny and beautiful. The white swan has a bill of orange, which is ugly. The black one has a rose-colored bill, with eyes to match, and they look like rubies held up to the sun. When the black fellow ruffles up his feathers you see beautiful, charcoaly, watered-silky waves tinged with iridescent hues, while the white one is only just white. However, he is at his best when he also ruffles up. On the whole, which would you rather be, a black swan or a white one?"

Marion looked up seriously.

"The black; by all means the black," he said, unhesitatingly.

"No, you should wish to be the white. They are the most stainless of all God's creatures. I love them. Think how that hoarse croak of theirs must afflict them, knowing what they were really born to, and that nothing but death can give them their right to song."

"That is true for more than your swans," Ballantyne said, as she began to row again. "It is the word that says itself in every slum, when you look at those defrauded faces. Even in lives with larger hopes it is true, too."

Marion was silent. The memory of the morning had come again, and she did not want to think or speak of it yet. She rowed on, but the spell was broken, and she laid down the oars suddenly.

"It is your turn now," she said. "I think I am a little tired, after all," and took her place at the rudder. Here talking was less easy, and she simply watched the banks as they went down. She would have gone directly to her room had time allowed, but barely enough remained to dress and cross the lawn to the rectory, the low drawing-room of which was sweet with flowers, which lightened the sombre effect of the dark wainscoting. Mrs. Earnshaw sat there beaming before her kettle and cups.

"It 's all the same, you see," she cried. "We cannot be modern if we would, and the modern bits that will creep in look as if they had no kinship.

Here is my daughter Mrs. Wallis, and here comes Mr. Earnshaw."

Marion received a cordial greeting from the daughter, a slender duplicate of the mother, and looked with interest at the dark, serious, courtly man who came forward quietly and gave her his hand. How had he and this irrepressible wife lived thirty years in the harmony which it was plain existed, was Marion's first thought; and she watched him as he greeted John Ballantyne kindly, but with a certain reserve, as if there were between them some unsettled difference.

"I am sorry to leave you," he said when he had drunk a cup of tea, with a word or two to Marion as he brought her hers. "But old Adam is much worse, and has sent for me. Young Adam, with his shameful defiance of everything he has been taught to respect, is really responsible for his grandfather's state. Those who have misled him have much to answer for."

His eyes rested severely on Ballantyne, who apparently had not heard, and simply bowed as the rector left the room.

"You see what you 've done, John," Mrs. Earnshaw said, reproachfully. "Mr. Earnshaw is so stirred up with the disturbance in the parish, and the way the Queen is in about it, that I 'm not sure he would n't imprison you all, you and your tribe together, a bit, just to keep the peace. Why will you and Barrows do so?"

"What?"

"Stir up everything and make the people discontented. Young Adam was a good workman, and never a word about drainage and such nonsense before that Institute opened over the line, and he began to think he knew more than his betters. You are out of the Queen's books once for all, my dear, and it 's a pity. Miss Lacy must see her, and she must go with me. I can take you to-morrow morning, my dear. She likes to see all that come to me, and she is worth looking at indeed. There 's none like her."

"Yes, that is certainly one of the Badgeley experiences," he said, quietly. "That and Walter's studio. Both are unique."

"The last you shall have at once, Miss Lacy, if you 're sure you 'll have no more tea," said Mrs. Earnshaw, in her motherly fashion. "'T is only a step across to the cottage."

Ballantyne had risen.

"Barrows and his sister dine with us to-day," he said; "and perhaps Miss Lacy, who is tired, had better rest a little."

"You 've more sense than me, John, and she with no color left," said Mrs. Earnshaw, with solicitude. "A bit of sleep will set you up at once, if you 're like me."

"I am a little tired," said Marion, glad to escape from a certain tension which, if not in the people, seemed to be in the air, and she crossed the lawn,

followed by her host, who looked at her a little anxiously.

"You have rowed too hard," he said. "There will be a full hour for quiet, for we dine at seven, and Barrows will not be here till then. You will like them both, though I dare say you are heartily tired of strangers, are you not?"

"I find every one immensely kind and interesting," Marion said, and then made her retreat, glad to escape for a little. She slept for a few moments; a sudden falling into deep, dreamless silence, and a waking as if she had returned from some familiar country where rest abided. There was the same half consciousness of grandfather bending over her and stroking her hair, that sometimes came to her, and that always meant special refreshment; and when she woke, the weight that had oppressed her was quite gone.

She had dressed when Price came to the door to ask if she needed her, and descended presently to the drawing-room, finding there a little lady, gray-haired and incisive, who had just entered at the long window opening toward the rectory.

"Brother will be here in a moment," she said, as Ballantyne came forward and presented her to Marion, at whom she looked with kindly but very distinct scrutiny.

"Another American," he said, with a slight smile. "Miss Barrows does not understand Americans, Miss Lacy, and will probably demand some explana-

tion. Ah, there you are, Barrows," he added, turning heartily to a big, burly man, who came across the lawn with a swing, his mass of red-brown hair flying, and his blue eyes gleaming, half with wrath, half with fun.

"I see nothing for a place like this but dynamite," he said. "Mrs. Earnshaw has pitched into me vehemently on several counts. I have perverted you, you have perverted Adam, therefore I have perverted both. Everything was as it should be, and is as it should n't, and I owe it to the parish to leave at once and carry my heresies where they will do less harm. I want dinner first and then we will decide."

"We will make Miss Lacy arbiter. She is an unprejudiced judge," Ballantyne said, as he presented the new-comer, who looked at her with interest.

"Then she has not made up her mind," he said. "How is that?"

"I don't know in what direction you require it to be made," Marion said, as they moved toward the dining-room and took their places at the round table, with its softly shaded lights and perfect appointments. "It is very definite on some points, I can assure you."

"I shall ask you for some of them when the first rage is appeased," Mr. Barrows replied. "I have had a long spin on the bicycle, as well as a pitched battle at the end, but even rage has not spoiled my appetite. I could wish myself an ogre, and the

Queen, delicately stewed, we will say, with bland sauces, served up before me."

"For shame, Jack!" said his sister. "Though, to be sure, there is no release for the parish till her end comes. The strange thing is her power, with Heading close by, as modern as this is ancient, and boiling over with dissent and discontent like every mill-town everywhere. But she has had her finger on every man, woman, and child more than seventy years, and I often fancy she knows every thought of their minds, and every breath they draw. She sends wine and soup and jellies day after day into these cottages, but not a drain-pipe shall be laid, nor a floor over the clay floors that cramp the old people with rheumatism, nor a school allowed save a dame school for the little ones. It is a leaf out of the feudal system, and I am the wiser for knowing it."

"Then you do not live here?" Marion asked.

"No, indeed, not I. I came to my brother, who chooses to think that this is ground for his propaganda. He came down and hired a cottage, — clay floor, oak rafters, and all, — and is living in it in order to demonstrate that he is one of the people. He has put in some hooks, and has some Roman kettles and odds and ends, testimony to his inward desire to return, and live with his favorite possessions, but these are not to be mentioned. We are Mrs. Earnshaw's cousins, and as he belongs to the fifteenth, and my brother to the twentieth century, it is rather hard on both."

"What are you preaching?" Marion said.

"I? I am preaching nothing. It is Jack who does it. I am hardly as revolutionary as he, but the ignorance of these people has so frightful a quality, that I am in danger of becoming so. You should be glad that there is no chance for such experience in America, and that you are spared so much, at least."

"Perhaps not of this particular order," Marion said, "for this seems quite out of usual lines, even here. But our castes are as sharply defined as yours, and there is unending struggle to wipe out dividing lines, and bring everything to the equality which is, I believe, the Socialistic ideal; an impossible one," she added under her breath.

"Why?" said Miss Barrows, sharply.

"Because the proportion of gray matter in the brain determines that thing," said Marion; "and the highest intelligence will rule, and the lowest be ruled, so long as water follows its nature and runs down hill."

"But when intelligence is evenly distributed, and each man his own ruler, what becomes of your law?"

"An impossible future," Marion repeated. "Brutalization can cease. Men can have their chance, and a thousand things be given, denied them now; but the secret nerve fibre that means genius is out of your power, train and work as you will. This doctrine of absolute equality is as monstrous as the one on the other side, that sets the rich apart from the poor in two distinct classes. The truth lies between.

It is only in humility that is willing to learn patiently and thoroughly, that real life is lived. Your proposition of equality ends that in the beginning."

"Evidently you are an aristocrat," said Miss Barrows. "You must have found your ideas a little out of harmony with your environment at home."

"I did," Marion answered quietly; "I have come to England because I felt more at home under an established order of things than I do in our chaos. I may be all wrong, and glad to change my mind before a year is over. At present, in spite of all the suffering I am coming to know, and my knowledge that your reformers can hardly cry alarm too loudly, I do believe you are living better lives than we. Whatever our republic meant to us in the beginning, it seems to mean little now, and an American has less and less cause to boast of his name. I am untrue to my flag, you will say, but at least I am true to truth, or to what I count as such."

Some inward impulse seemed to compel her words, and she looked at her host with a half wonder why they came now, and if he would rise in defence of his theory. He was quite silent, but any deficiency was covered by Miss Barrows, who, after an astonished pause, began a series of questions as to the American school system, and American methods with children in general, arraigning them so fiercely that Marion, after various admissions, found herself obliged to defend such advantages as were bound up with the bundle of errors.

"Your women are the natural result of this system," Miss Barrows went on, calmly unconvinced by any of Marion's points. "I find them very pretty. It is singular how pretty they are, though most of them lack repose; but there is no breadth of view, and strange limitations of thought in many ways. It is a certain crudeness that I object to. You will pardon me, Miss Lacy, I am simply seeking information, and I am determined to understand America, if I can. I should suppose the trouble is you have no scholars, and your rich are most of them hopelessly vulgar; that is, I judge so by those who travel."

"Till you have been over to see for yourself you cannot really judge," said Marion, half amused and half indignant at the tone of rather pleased depreciation. "We are very crude, of course; but then a hundred years is not a long life for a nation, which began with an unsubdued country and has lived through three wars, not counting the minor ones."

"All of them very unnecessary," interjected Miss Barrows, decisively.

"When you do go over," Marion went on, ignoring the remark, "I think you will find the scholarly element stronger than you imagine, and though you will miss the sense of repose, and encounter the mercantile spirit everywhere, I doubt if it is more keenly developed than in shopkeeping London, or in your great manufacturing towns."

"That is what we fight," said Miss Barrows, discontentedly. "But in the meantime there is some-

thing better, while with you the spirit rules. You have no galleries nor museums; no art, no popular taste, no music. The daily life is utterly barren, I am told, and on very excellent authority." Marion flushed slightly.

"Naturally, because the English Puritan eschewed them all and set the seal of his barbarism upon us in the beginning. You did not escape entirely, if the traces of their theories still to be seen in your cathedrals is to be believed. We are just emerging from that repression, and ready now for whatever art can do for us. She has begun. We work swiftly, and good work is already understood. I can even imagine that our result, in the end, may be quite as high as yours, though naturally all of the new school. But the love of beauty and the sense of form and color seem to be keener with us than with you, in spite of all this inheritance of beauty about you. We cannot miss it in the end."

The shadow of a smile flickered about John Ballantyne's mouth, and vanished.

"I was told that you were very Anglican in your tendencies," said Mr. Barrows, with a laugh. "But evidently you have not been understood. You will be able to define yourself to yourself on all points when you leave Anne's hands, for she gives her talent for cross-examination full play, and she has no hesitation in expressing her opinions."

"We all come from the same stock," said Marion, coloring a little, and amazed at the undercurrent of

indignation which had made its flow felt. "It is the growth of the mercantile spirit in both countries that is responsible for the decay of art."

"Oh, art, art!" interrupted Mr. Barrows, tempestuously. "I am sick to death of this feeble wail over the death of art, as if it meant manliness or strength or courage, or any other high virtue. The Spartans had no art, but they have managed to leave some record behind them."

"A name or two and a great battle," said Ballantyne. "That is all, and these only for the student who knows history, while Greek art and thought are for eyes and soul in all time. A few Englishmen believe this, and such art spirit as is left is due to them, and will be wiped out if you Socialists have your way."

"What!" cried Mr. Barrows, with a shake of his tawny mane. "You are one of us. What do you mean by denying the faith?"

"I am one of you, yes, up to a certain point. I am ready for most of your reforms. But when you have killed monopoly, shortened working hours, made education a State matter, and seen that a chance for all is certain, beyond that I will not go, since I claim the right to my own individuality, and must live my life in my own fashion secure from dictation from the State. It is because the real art spirit includes this individual liberty — because there can be no real art without it — that I look for its coming again as a part of the new civilization."

"So far," said Mr. Barrows, "it has brought death in its train, and that is all. There is not a monument of the past whose cement is not mingled with human blood and tears, and whose foundations are not on human bones. The story of art is the story of outrage and oppression from the beginning of time. Of the Middle Ages with their mawkish saints and Madonnas it is the record of a superstition that has delayed the world's true progress hundreds of years, and still delays it. Away with it all, and let us have a clean start once more."

"You scout the past, yet how will you escape its inheritance?" his host said, after a moment's silence. "It is your blood and bone; the marrow of your thought. If you wiped out every record to-morrow, you would still remain what it has made you."

"The old battle," Miss Barrows said, discontentedly. "For a man who counts himself radical, you have the most extraordinary streaks of conservatism, John. The point is, to improve the condition of the people, and I see no way but to wipe out just such obstacles, as, for instance, this good-for-naught obstructionist that you call Queen of Badgeley-on-Thames."

"Wipe them all out," began her brother, energetically; but at this moment Price entered, and, going up to Mr. Ballantyne, said something in a low tone.

"My mother is not so well," he said, rising at once. "You will take care of Miss Lacy, Miss Barrows, and if I cannot return you will understand."

"Perfectly," Miss Barrows said, with a gentler look than Marion had seen on her face. "A son among a million," she added, as he went out. "He worships the ground she treads, and she does the same by him. They are two lovers, and yet she has half killed him."

"Because at bottom, call it what fine names you like, it is cursed selfishness," said her brother. "You need not shake your head at me. I admire Mrs. Ballantyne, and you know it, but she has been a millstone about his neck."

"That shows how much a man can understand," said Miss Barrows, unruffled. "Except for this business of doing what he calls 'going home,' they are of one mind. Why should he go? I say. He thinks he is American, but he is English, and he will find it so when he once gets among those depressing Yankees. I beg your pardon, Miss Lacy. I cannot keep in mind that you are American, any more than that he is, for you have not their voice nor way, nor anything, but you are just a nice English girl."

"Thanks," said Marion, with a little flush. "But I am American all the same. You do not know us yet."

"You and John are enough," returned Miss Barrows. "I'll know no more till I must. We will have our coffee in the drawing-room, and then, I am sorry to say, we must go, for Jack has some one to see. Will you come and look at the cottage to-morrow?"

"I am promised to Mrs. Earnshaw for the morning, and I go up at noon," Marion began; but Miss Barrows broke in:

"Oh, you will not go at noon. Mrs. Ballantyne will want you, and you will stay."

"I think not," Marion said, as they went into the drawing-room, where Mr. Barrows drank his coffee in a preoccupied way, the pair leaving immediately. Marion wandered about the room for a time, played a little, and then, fearing that the sound might reach the sick-room, chose a book from the library, and went to her own room, with a feeling that many days had passed since she came under the new roof, and had looked on the white wraith who still was called its mistress.

Chapter Tenth

THREE weeks later, Marion, rowing up the river, with long pauses at one and another of its fascinating bends, stopped suddenly as a look toward the narrow path winding down through the meadows showed her the familiar figure in gray, for which she had had more than one longing, and Miss Ryde, as she came nearer, waved her umbrella with enthusiasm.

"Eleanor gave me no peace," she said as Marion, who had run her boat up on the shore, sprang out and went toward her, her tired face full of satisfaction. "Your notes told nothing. Mrs. Ballantyne is a leech, and you are of the stuff that lends itself to such blood-sucking, and calls it 'doing one's duty.' I have run down to find out what the matter is, and why you do not come back to the place where you belong."

"I belong anywhere, you know," Marion said, holding Miss Ryde's warm, firm hand with a sense of strength and dependability that was very comforting.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said Miss Ryde, energetically. "You belong where you had settled down, and where

there is distinct work for you to do. Eleanor says she believes now in reincarnation, for you have come to us so much like our own that you must have been so in a previous state. I am inclined to agree with the child. We miss you. I am come to take you back and to blow a breath of common sense into this paralyzed and inert hole. I know it. I have stayed here, heaven help me! You do not want to row any more, do you? If you do, I will get in, and you may take me where you like. I want to talk with you."

"Then I will row up to the next bend, where there is an old tree and a seat. You see that I am prepared for it. Here is a rug and my sketch book, and one to read; in short, everything I take to convince myself that I propose to be employed, and then leave unused from pure laziness. Did you ever do so?"

"Pure tiredness," repeated Miss Ryde vindictively, as she took her place facing Marion, and noted the dark circles under her eyes and the worn look of her face. "What do you mean? What does everybody mean? Why has n't John Ballantyne sent you home?"

"He is not in the least responsible," Marion said, quickly. "It is quite myself. I chose to stay because it seemed to comfort Mrs. Ballantyne, and because, — I can't tell how, but I felt that I must. Price went up with Mr. Ballantyne, and got everything that I needed, and he even took the trouble

to bring down my clay, the little figure I was modelling, but I have not touched it. There is so much to do; so many interests."

"Whose?" said Miss Ryde, grimly.

"Everybody's. I seem to know the whole village, even to the Queen herself, who has taken a violent fancy to me, but persists in believing me one of the original colonists in America, and a piece somehow of the Revolutionary War in which her father took part. She upbraids me as if I had begun it, and then says, 'Well, after all, you are more English than American, if you are a rebel, and now you had better stay where there is law and order, and learn your duty.'"

"Humph!" said Miss Ryde. Marion looked at her but went on.

"She insists on my going there every day, and inquires, for instance, how I dared to take part in anything so atrocious as throwing good tea overboard, or what insolent streak led me to help in such a document as the Declaration of Independence? She pities me for having come up among such a God-defying, lawless, bloodthirsty set of savages, who defied their lawful king and murdered his soldiers. It gives me a most extraordinary feeling, for she knows more about it than I do, in detail at least, since she remembers every word her father ever told her, and it is as fresh as yesterday."

"You are evading me," said Miss Ryde, severely. "It is not the maundering of a wild old woman that

has given you such a look, — a look that might come if you had signed a compact with the devil."

"I feel as if I had, almost," Marion said, hardly above her breath. She had started visibly at the words, and now as she rowed in to shore, and held the boat steady for Miss Ryde, avoided her look, and busied herself with arranging the rug and fastening the boat securely.

"This is all perfectly comfortable, and now you are to tell me why you have settled down here, and why you are worn to a thread paper," said Miss Ryde calmly, as she took her place, but with a tone compelling definite reply. "Have you been nursing this white vampire?"

"How can you!" said Marion, indignantly. "She is most lovely, and wonderful, and unselfish. It is only that her mind is set on this one thing, and I cannot do what she wishes. Really, I ought to go away, but she holds me so I cannot."

"It is well that I know you are not an idiot," said Miss Ryde, who had set her lips firmly as she listened, "for I suppose you know you are talking like one. How does she hold you?"

"I wish I knew," Marion answered, meeting Miss Ryde's eyes with a look so troubled, that the elder woman bent forward and patted her cheek.

"Poor little girl," she said. "Well?"

"I was going away the next day," Marion went on. "She was ill again after that first night, and Mr. Ballantyne was with her till early morning. I

had talked with her before that; a strange talk, as if she had always known me and had a right to ask what she pleased, and she did almost, because she had known my father and the rest. Then she asked for me when she felt better again, for she goes up and down in an hour in some strange way, and she begged me to stay, because I did her so much good, she said. She wanted me to sit by her, and then to read to her a little, and each day she held me tighter and tighter. I am with her a good deal, and when I go out of the room I feel as if I had left a part of my life behind. It is her wish that makes it so hard. She thinks that I can, if I will, make her son hate America and be willing never to go back. When she begged me at first, I said I would try, because I had thought little or nothing about it, and could not realize what it might mean to him. Now I do not wish one more particle for myself, the return, than I did when I left it, nor shall I. But all this questioning and sifting by these people has defined to me some things that were never clear before. He ought to go if he wishes it, if only to find how mistaken he is. I have to admit the old ideal that was there once, but he will not find it now. It is dead, and he will break his heart over it. That I believe. It is a sort of insanity that makes her hold him so to an old promise; but she says, with the look of an old prophetess, that it will be his death. How can we tell if she may not be a true one, after all?"

"True fiddlestick!" said Miss Ryde, with fury.

"Of all the irrational, wrongheaded, unnatural ways of looking at things, Laura Ballantyne's takes the palm. Where John gets a gleam of common sense is a mystery, much more how he keeps it. You have had enough of this, and you are going up with me to-morrow morning. You are doing no good here to yourself or anybody else. She may go on this way for the next thirty years. These people who are always dying, never do die. Come away."

"She is beautiful," said Marion. "It is like talking with a disembodied spirit, almost. She has such beautiful thoughts and fancies. She is so wonderful."

"Fancies, yes," returned Miss Ryde. "There is bewitchment about her. That I grant, and John, with his romantic love for her, is befuddled, like all of us. Come away. You have better things to do, and so have I. John Ballantyne must work out his salvation, and so must you; and these people have naught to do with it or you, and little with him in any way, did he but know it. His mother thought he would marry one of the Earnshaw girls, and settle into an English gentleman; and he might have done worse, but he has never been in love. I believe he does not mean to be on this side the sea, though it comes where it will, God help us all!"

A sudden flush dyed Marion's cheeks, and deepened under Miss Ryde's eyes. She turned to the boat, and that lady, after one astonished moment, came, it was plain, to some inward resolution, for she smiled cheerfully, and, as they sped down stream,

talked steadily of the last club, and of various people who had been brought experimentally by Mr. Beresford to her last Sunday evening, and proved first amusing and then peculiarly obnoxious, one of them being a stout American medium, who had persisted in seeing spirits behind everybody's chair, and had undertaken to name them, failing disastrously. Ballantyne was at the boat-landing as they reached it, and came forward with an amazed look as he saw Miss Ryde.

"Yes, it is I, John," she said. "I got off at Heading, for I wanted my old walk through the fields and along the river path, and there was this child just as I came to it. I sent some luggage on by a Badgeley boy, and it is there by this time unless the Queen has special hours for passage over her bridge."

"You had forsworn Badgeley so absolutely," he said, "that we could not suppose you would ever come again. Everybody would be at the house this evening if they knew you were here."

"Fate can order that," said Miss Ryde. "I came for Miss Lacy. We want her in Chelsea, and there are some pictures Eleanor says she must see at once. She is to do as she pleases, however."

"That point will have to be settled with my mother, I fancy. She will hold fast."

"I think I will go up," said Marion, with an evident effort. "I will come down again if I am really needed, but Mrs. Ballantyne is quite herself now; a

delightful self, and it is a dear old place, but I have lingered long enough."

"I shall not urge. You know best," said Miss Ryde, who had looked at both quietly, and gave a little nod as she stepped through the long window, and then went forward to Mrs. Earnshaw, who came flying over the lawn.

"Barbara Ryde! You! And why would n't you come before, — and will you stay now?"

"A night," said Miss Ryde, submitting to be folded to Mrs. Earnshaw's capacious breast, but shaking herself vigorously when the embrace ended.

"Always the same," Mrs. Earnshaw said; "and none but me would forgive the way you go on if you 're but touched. Sure it 's time you came, for you 're needed," she added, with a significant glance toward the pair who had gone into the library, and stood before the window.

"I want no words," said Miss Ryde, decisively. "Man's meddling, or woman's either, mars and not makes, if there 's aught like that in question. I will use my own eyes, my dear, and do better left to myself."

"Crusty as ever," said Mrs. Earnshaw, with her mellow laugh. "Go your way as you will, but you will take a cup of tea with us. They come at five, just as always, and it will not steal much of your time. 'T is five now, indeed, but I dare say you are tired, Barbara."

"Not I," returned Miss Ryde, marching across

the little lawn and brandishing her umbrella as she went. Mr. Earnshaw greeted her courteously, but evidently with certain mental reservations, and Marion smiled as she saw the look with which Miss Ryde regarded him, and the sudden twinkle which announced a resolution.

"It 's a satisfaction to think of a live man down here who will not mince words," she began in a pause which came at last, in spite of Mrs. Earnshaw's best efforts to keep the conversation away from dangerous subjects. She had looked apprehensively at Miss Ryde now and then, quite conscious that mischief was in her mind, and uncertain what form it might take. That lady, in the meantime, sipped her tea and looked calmly over her cup at her antagonist.

"Barrows will never stop for the sake of sparing feelings like John, here," she went on deliberately.

"You are all paralyzed, it is true, and lose natural sensitiveness, living under that upas-tree of a Queen, but he is good as an electric shock. At least you are forced to know that other people are thinking, and that the world moves in spite of your faith that it does n't."

"Barbara!" cried Mrs. Earnshaw, desperately. "Why will you stir strife with such sayings? You ought to know Mr. Earnshaw is not one to bear them."

"And why not?" said Miss Ryde, defiantly. "Why should he not bear them? They are the only

truth that ever comes to his ears, shut in here in the middle of his cheese, as comfortable as La Fontaine's rat. Why not?"

"Barbara Ryde," said Mr. Earnshaw, putting down his cup and rising from his chair, with the look of dignified and polished condemnation that had for a generation struck terror to all offenders. "It is godless women who are responsible for more evil than all your ignorant, benighted Anarchists and other children of the devil. You have no real interest in these things. You sacrifice nothing. You desire only, like the Athenians, to hear and to see daily some new thing. It is the mere foam and fury of disjointed minds that you call modern thought. We lived our lives here peacefully till this curse came in, and you will be judged for the evil, idle curiosity and tampering with things too high for you has wrought."

"Barbara, Barbara!" implored Mrs. Earnshaw, as Miss Ryde in turn put down her cup and stretched her hand toward her umbrella. "Do remember that we are all old friends, too old to disagree; and don't let fancies come between. Why would you begin it?"

"Why would I?" said Miss Ryde reflectively, after a moment in which she and Mr. Earnshaw faced each other in silence. "Because I had a certain curiosity to see if the Middle Ages still ruled. They do. You know no more of the real England of to-day than the Babes in the Wood. I am satis-

fied. You will hear no more. You are a good soul, Horatia Earnshaw, but I see no more use in pretending we are in sympathy than I see in pretence of any order. You will agree with me presently." And Miss Ryde stalked through the open window, and crossed the lawn with a determined step.

"I grieve that old relations must be altered," said Mr. Earnshaw in his smoothest tone, but with flushed cheeks. "But as rector of this parish and in charge of souls, my duty is plain. This thing must be wiped out, and I refuse hereafter to be a party to words on such subjects under this roof. I include you, John, as well as all others, though you have been less obnoxious than your friends."

Mr. Earnshaw had risen to his full height, and stood as if he would draw the circle of the Church about himself and all that was his; nor did he relax even to Marion, who said good night with the feeling that this might be only the first rumble of the earthquake. Ballantyne lingered for a moment, for Mrs. Earnshaw had turned to him impulsively, and Marion crossed the lawn and went to her room, dressed hastily and descended to the library, to find Miss Ryde sitting there reading as quietly as if she had never heard of conflict.

"I meant to make it impossible to come again," she said, "and I really think I have succeeded. I regard this as an accursed place. The life lived in it is from beginning to end a parasitic one. I stifle when I come into it. This ancient beldame, whose

whole existence has been obstruction; this smooth-tongued man, who for once has been made to speak his real mind, and whose fat living, whether he believes it or not, is ground out of these poor; this unwholesome house, with hysteria for its presiding genius, — it is all false life from beginning to end, and I want no more of it. There are better things waiting for you, — for John Ballantyne as well. As I feel this minute, I could fire the house with my own hands."

"I think it has made you unnatural, too," said Marion, in amazement. "Dear Miss Ryde, why should you let yourself be so stirred by things quite outside your own life?"

"They are not," Miss Ryde answered, after a pause. "Nothing is outside my life that I choose to make part of it. I had better say that the thing that comes to my life is, by that token, a part of it. I have made my protest now, as I will, please God, make it hereafter against all false doctrine, accredited or otherwise, and naught on earth embodies it like the British Philistine. I belong to the order save as I have been emancipated. Should I not know of what I speak?"

"But these are kind, dear people. Why should you not enjoy this exquisite spot and all the good things in it? Think of it as a picture."

"I want no picture whose colors are mixed with human tears, and whose shadows are human ignorance and brutishness," said Miss Ryde, firmly.

"But you may quarrel with every lovely spot on the earth's surface if you take that ground."

"And I have the right to quarrel if every reasonable brain in its midst is not seeking to bring nearer its own level every other brain. Here it is wasted force to live or to work, for every condition means death. Come away."

"I may come, but I choose still to remember the beauty, and to claim all the good there is in it," Marion said. "As you, too, will do when this mood is past. I do not know you."

Miss Ryde bent forward and touched Marion's cheek. Her eyes were quiet and sad.

"It is simply that I have shut one more door behind me, and am in a new room," she said. "That is the way things go with me. Thoughts come, — thoughts of all orders, and I let them settle and work as they will, and suddenly some day, out of the mass, comes the one thing to be held to, — the crystallization of what was for me. This time seems to have been chosen for a fresh departure; and though I admit it is a little uncomfortable for everybody concerned, it will not be in the end. Truth must always mean the best ultimately."

"But truth seems to me so often such a purely relative thing," Marion said; and then, after a pause, "What made you begin to think of these things?"

Miss Ryde grew very pale, and a strange look came into her eyes.

"Once in my life," she said, "I believed every-

thing that a man of many thoughts said to me, and I believed a good while. I know better now, but out of the chaos he presented to me, I have made some selections that stand firm. My dear, may you never have to get your experience in the same way."

Price had entered as she spoke, and took a cushion or two from the sofa. "Does that mean that Mrs. Ballantyne will come down, Price?" Miss Ryde went on, quietly.

"Mr. John is bringing her now, ma'am," Price said, and went toward the dining-room.

"She comes down very often, almost daily, lately," Marion said, trying to recover herself. "She is very frail. I think she seems more so every time. They are there now, are they not?"

Nothing more shadowy could well be conceived than the white figure that leaned forward delightedly as Miss Ryde entered the room.

"I have saved all my strength to dine with you," she cried. "It is like old times. How good you are to come!"

Miss Ryde's face softened. Inveigh as she might, she was none the less under the charm which had held Marion, and dropping suddenly all her antagonism, she gave herself up to it, and they lingered at the table till Mrs. Ballantyne said:

"I must go up, but come with me, Barbara, as you used to do."

Miss Ryde nodded silently, and followed, as the fragile little figure was lifted in Ballantyne's strong

arms and carried slowly and steadily up the stairs. Marion stood below watching the delicate head, with its waving white hair lying on his shoulder, the face illumined by the gleam of the lamp in Price's hand.

"How beautiful she is," Marion thought, as she caught the smile sent back to her as they paused on the landing, and then she turned into the library and sat down by the window, and looked into the old garden where night-moths were humming about the lime-tree. It had all become so home-like, so familiar, that, in spite of the tension of the last month, she felt a pang at the thought of separation from it.

Now that separation was certain, she wondered why such tension should have been. It was the unspoken rather than spoken word that had brought it about, for since that first interview Mrs. Ballantyne had been quite silent as to her own wishes. They had sat much in her room reading and talking, and though America as a topic had never once been formally introduced, it had come up in a thousand ways. Her own life there; the growth and changes of Boston; the new ways in which wealth was coming; the type of man that made it, and of woman that spent it; art, literature, all and each in turn had been canvassed, always as if seeking information; always with that silent undercurrent of dread and dislike, and the demand, no less silent, but more and more compelling, that her will should be fulfilled. Now and then Ballantyne asked a question, but for the most part he listened, making no comment on

the reply, and like one whose mind being quite settled moved on undisturbed in its own lines.

"He thinks I am leagued against him," Marion had thought often, with an impatient desire to show that this was untrue, and then came his mother's comment, or the question ingeniously framed to bring out the worst side of the point that might have come up. Strong as was Marion's sense of personal independence, she felt an often almost intolerable subjugation, intangible yet firm as the thread the spider casts about its prey.

"It is silly, and so absolutely blind," she thought often. "The least real knowledge of human nature would show her that she must defeat herself in the end. I seem her tool and feel so, and yet she only speaks my own thought."

Outside the walls of the invalid's room Ballantyne put the subject away absolutely. Once or twice he had been up to town, but save for this they had been almost constantly together, and she had begun to feel the same sense of dependence on his quiet strength that made part of the relation of all to him. He carried a burden. That, to one who watched him, was plain, but he carried it with a cheerfulness that deceived even his mother.

For the rest, he was the most delightful of companions, a thousand interests filling his life, of all which they talked as the days went on, and her confidence grew, and reserve, save on one point, had ended. With him the same fact seemed true, even

when she was most conscious of the underlying reserve. There were moments when she felt sure he understood her position, and when her inward rebellion at his mother's methods was strongest, she had once, at least, caught a look that meant not only comprehension, but something more; what, she had not sought to define.

"He is under a spell," she thought, sitting in the soft, lingering twilight with no consciousness of how time was going, and remembering how his eyes had rested on her, as she had come suddenly upon him the day before, under the lime-tree where he had been sitting with a book. The color had come to her cheeks in a sudden flood as she met the look. There were words on his lips, she knew, but Mrs. Earnshaw's voice had sounded from the hedge, and they had both moved toward her at once. It was the memory of that look that had brought the color again as Miss Ryde spoke, and now she was going, and perhaps no words would ever come.

"I cannot help it," she thought. "Everything here is unnatural. I want myself again. I must go back to London and find out what I really think about everything. Now I am under a spell, and reason has fled. I will wait its return before I hear or say more words that may only make the tangle greater. For, when all is said, what can it be but a tangle?"

"Miss Ryde sends down good-night, ma'am, and she is tired and has gone to her room," said Price's

voice near her, and Marion rose with sudden resolution.

"I am tired, too," she said, "and will go up now;" and she went hastily up the stairs to her room, conscious that she might soon be sought, and that here was her best refuge.

Chapter Eleventh

MISS RYDE descended next morning with an energy that swept everything before it. Mrs. Ballantyne had had one of the severest of her attacks during the night, Price announced, and would not let Mr. John out of her sight, and Miss Ryde took full command: ordered a cart from the inn for the luggage, saw that Marion ate a satisfactory breakfast, and sent her up to pack, and then, with hands behind her, paced up and down the long drawing-room, shaking her head and muttering unintelligible sentences as she went.

"What is to happen will happen," she said at last aloud, as Marion entered in her travelling dress, just in time to receive Mrs. Earnshaw, who dissolved in tears as she saw her.

"It 's all your fault, Barbara," she cried, "and to think I should have to say it to your face! You 've broken my heart, and now you want to break others! Why won't you learn reason, and not throw away your best friends just for whims?"

Miss Ryde set her lips firmly and stood silent till Mrs. Earnshaw wiped her eyes and tried to smile,

then, as she saw the preparations for departure, burst into tears again.

"You are going!" she said, "and you may never come again; and what was the use of tangling everything so that I can't even ask you to come again? You are crazy, Barbara."

"Perhaps I am, Horatia," returned Miss Ryde, grimly, "but I prefer my kind to yours. I am not as hard a flint as you take me for, and perhaps some day you will see that I am none the less a friend. You certainly will if you need me. Come, child; we are to walk, and there is no more than time. John can't escape, and we must care for ourselves."

"It is miserable to go with no good-bye," said Marion, distressed. "I do not know how to do it, yet this may last for days, as it has before."

"Precisely, and therefore you have no responsibility in the matter," said Miss Ryde, firmly. "We have nothing to do but to go, and I wish that before leaving we could exorcise some of the spirits that rule here. You think I am flinty and lack comprehension, and perhaps both are true. But I hate waste, above all of human life, and if ever a life was wasted it is this one that waits on the whim of an embodied lunatic asylum. Leave your good-byes as I am doing, and Heaven help all in and out of the house!" And with this comprehensive prayer Miss Ryde passed out from the gate, and stood waiting for Marion till Mrs. Earnshaw, releasing her from a close embrace, went sobbing across the lawn.

"They were so good. They have been so good," Marion said, with shaking voice.

"Say what you like. I sha'n't mind it," returned Miss Ryde. "You don't see that it had to be, but I am sorry you are dragged into it. Now come, else we shall not get away till afternoon."

Marion looked back as they crossed the little bridge with its ancient toll-taker, with the pang that had often come to her in leaving some lovely spot she might never see again. With it was something no less strong, — the curious sense of compulsion that had held her here, and that seemed now to urge her back, till she felt impelled, almost, to turn and wait the will that had dominated her silently but profoundly. She sighed heavily, like one coming out of hypnotic sleep, as the train glided away from the little station, and with every mile the sense of pressure lessened.

Miss Ryde held a book and nominally read, but she watched the girl's face and nodded now and then, like one convinced of the correctness of a theory.

"There shall be no more words till she wants them," she said to herself. "She is dazed, and will not know her own mind for a month, if she does then."

"Come this evening for a bit, if you will," she said, as the cab left her at her own door; and Marion smiled yes, looking about her with a feeling of home-coming that was most comforting. Mrs. Pattle received her with open arms. Polly wept for joy. Below, the river sparkled and the boats shot by. Even the roar

of London, muffled here, yet always the distinct undertone, seemed part of the welcome, and she unpacked and settled her belongings, rejecting Polly's aid, eagerly rejoiced to feel again that freedom, the loss of which was now a far more conscious fact than in the days just ended.

Jane, the inflexible, came in presently, smiling with suitably tempered gratification, with a message from Miss Ryde. Mr. Norris and Eleanor were to dine with her, and would Miss Lacy come also, else they would not feel the party complete?

This was the beginning of a constant series of engagements. The season was in full tide, and Marion soon found herself in great demand, going about a good deal with Eleanor and Mrs. Norris, and now and then with Miss Ryde. The latter, however, preferred her established methods, and simply allowed a little more license than usual.

Marion met many old acquaintances, most of them taking her reappearance for granted, and soon found herself overwhelmed with invitations. Now and then a stern dowager, who had heard that the rich young American chose to live in lodgings among Bohemians, Socialists, and all other elements of general upheaval and disruption, eyed her with stony disapproval, tempered, however, by the consciousness that American dollars were a great factor in the problem of younger sons; and, for the most part, the days were simply a choice of pleasant things.

Mr. Beresford she encountered everywhere, but he

remained faithful to the Sunday evenings in Cheyne Walk, bringing with him strange captures of all orders; and the days slipped away, each fuller than the last, but each with its distinct sense of loss, for in not one of them had John Ballantyne given token that he remembered her existence, save on the day following their leaving, when a brief note had come, saying that his mother was no better, and regretted that she could not have seen them again.

Marion wrote to Mrs. Ballantyne more than once, and then decided to let the correspondence drop till she was stronger again, and so a month passed. The "season" waned, and London, hot, dusty, and weary, waited August, and the day of release for the toilers of Hyde Park, and Rotten Row, and Piccadilly.

At last it came, and even in Chelsea were signs of flight. Cabs loaded down with hampers, gun cases, and fishing-rods waited before doors, from which issued mercantile gentlemen, clad in wondrous raiment modelled after their own theories as to a sportsman's dress, and scanned critically by small boys who waited and hooted in chorus, as indignant cabmen threatened from boxes or even descended for personal encounters. A day or two of this and then London was empty, save for the two or three million who remained to take their holiday a day or two at a time, or, a degree below, oblivious that the year knew any days but days of toil.

Marion had declined all invitations. A quiet nook in the Lake country; an old inn set deep in the hills

beyond the route of tourists, and full still of the flavor fast passing from all but the most secret retreats; it was this that drew her, as she remembered days in her early girlhood spent there with her father. Miss Ryde, who had watched her silently, smiled somewhat grimly as Marion announced that she should go nowhere, and meant to rest vigorously in order to be ready for October work and November fogs.

"American as usual," she said. "I distribute my rest as I go, and have no need of a holiday. But each to his own method. Perhaps when you have spent such energy as is necessary on resting, you will come to me in Devonshire, and see what my old home is like. I will write when I am ready for you, if you are inclined to spare me a bit of your playtime."

"I shall love to come. It will be delightful," Marion said, so heartily that Miss Ryde looked at her for a moment, and then bent to give her the touch of lips that seemed to have no knowledge of kisses, yet now and then adventured brief lessons in this unlearned branch, always with a little frown of uncertainty at the end.

"Is it well to be quite alone?" she asked, with unusual hesitation.

"I am never lonely," Marion answered, hastily. "For me it is often best;" and Miss Ryde, who had begun some inarticulate reply, checked herself and turned to her knitting.

A week later, Marion, settled in the low-ceiled, spacious room at the old inn, strewn now with books

and papers and tokens of work, restlessly begun and tossed aside, leaned from the open casement and looked out on the valley and the mist-shrouded hills. Calmness, quiet repose, all were here; an integral, vital part of everything save her own eager, unquiet, uncertain spirit. Miles of walking, hours of climbing steep and remembered ascents, pilgrimages to one point and another, and deep study of local traditions and records had filled the days.

Ten of these had passed, and, in spite of determined effort, restlessness still tormented. From hour to hour the same sense of compulsion that had been upon her in the weeks at Badgeley ruled. At moments it was so strong that she lifted her head from book or work, as if to face an unseen but powerful presence, till she began to question if this might be a haunted house, and she, for the time being, the victim of some sad or malignant spirit. But the bright fire and candle-light of evening curiously enough always dispelled all this, and thus confirmed her in the belief that it was all merest fancy, a freak of tired nerves.

On the tenth day the feeling had been stronger than on any that had preceded it, and Mrs. Porson, as she brought in the tea tray, looked anxiously at her pale cheeks.

"It 's young company you 're needing, me dear, if you 'll pardon me. It 's not natural being so much alone with naught but your own thoughts."

"I am very content," Marion said abstractedly,

and Mrs. Porson with another word or two set down the tray and went out.

The pressure did not lessen. Marion drank a little tea, and then read on for a time; wrote a letter or two, and stopped at last to walk up and down the room trying to argue herself into quietness and composure. It came at last in the old way as she laid her head on the pillow, over which, for a moment, grandfather seemed to lean, with the familiar form of words, "It's all right, my pet," and soon she slept profoundly.

Dreams came; the same that, night after night, had visited her. Long vistas of wonderful architectural forms and landscapes like yet unlike anything her waking eyes had seen were before her, and in the far remoteness a figure dim and undefined, that sought to come to her and could not. To-night the spell was lifted. It moved toward her at last, swiftly and silently, the form she had never seen save on sofa or bed or borne in the arms of her son. It was Mrs. Ballantyne, whose eyes, dark and troubled, were fixed on hers, and who bent over her.

"Oh, why, why did I not understand what I was doing?" she said. "I thought I was right, and I have been so wrong. I know now. Help me, Marion, help me to make the crooked straight. There will never be rest, never be rest, till wrong is made right."

The words ended in a wail. The hands were outstretched, woe looked from the deep eyes, and

Marion sprang up with a cry. Morning was there, but for a moment she seemed to see the misty form and hear the appeal in the familiar tones. Then the same sense of soothing, unseen love was about her, and the same words whispered themselves, "It 's all right, my pet; wait a little."

"Wait," Marion repeated, the sound of her own voice startling her into full wakefulness; but the dream stayed on, nor did its power lessen as the day went on.

Mrs. Porson came up several times to inquire anxiously how she felt, each fold of her triple chin seeming to radiate good will and general approbation. She had watched her comings and goings with perplexed but continuous interest, settling at last to her own and her equally curious husband's satisfaction that the singular lodger probably meant to write a book, and was gathering her material.

"There was two last summer as was, but none so sensible like," she said to Marion herself. "Two slips of girls they were, but they hired a cottage rough as rough, and lived with the cottage folk, only they came here for meals, and I said to them, 'What pleasure can it be?' and they said, 'But, Mrs. Porson, we have to live our background before we can write it,' and to this hour I am not certain rightly what they meant, for they said it for everything. Is it a background you 're seeking after, me dear?"

"No, a foreground, I think," returned Marion, with a smile; and Mrs. Porson, with an acquiescent but bewildered series of nods, went her way.

"To-day I have neither," Marion said to herself, as the mist took a character of sudden resolve and closed in, till only a dim outline of the nearest trees remained. "That seems to be all I have of late. Just the inch or two beyond me is all that is mine, and I must make the most of it. All the same, I must have my walk, though only the King's highway will be practicable this afternoon. Now for all the armor this wonderful climate requires, and I will try blind man's buff with nature."

"Keep to the straight road, me dear," Mrs. Porson said solicitously as she came to the door. "You 're not used even to that in our mists, but one cannot bide inside the day long, and you 'll be fresher for a sup of air."

A sup it was likely to prove. "It is really a drizzle," Marion said, half loud, as she settled into the steady swing learned in the long walks with her father. "We will call it mist, however, in deference to the prejudices of the neighborhood. At home, now, the sun is shining and the August shimmer is in the air. Home? Where is home? What would make it? I have none, nor shall I have. In the end I shall be simply another wandering American, and, like Miss Biggs, it will be 'wherever I hang up my bunnit.'"

The thought did not prove cheering, and as she went she peered into the mist on either side, with no power to determine what lay beyond, such diligent attention being required to keep in the highway itself

that she finally grew weary, and turned about, pausing for a moment as she heard the sound of firm footsteps coming steadily and close at hand. Some stray tourist, she thought, and remained standing, for the grayness all about seemed growing denser, and mist was turning into fog of almost London consistency. Collision might at any moment happen, and whether tourist or native she must sound some alarm.

"Take care!" she cried. "There is some one here."

"Some one?" a voice answered, and in another moment John Ballantyne held her hand, and she saw his face, worn and harassed, but an eager light in his eyes.

"I was coming to you," he said simply, as if only that could have been expected. "Miss Ryde told me you were here, and I could not wait to write."

"Fog seems to be your native element," said Marion, trying to release her hand, which he still held but dropped at her movement. "I shall never find myself in one, without expecting you to appear as pilot and bring me out in safety. Your mother is better, then? I have heard nothing from her for so long that I feared she must be very ill indeed."

"She has been, but it is quite over," he answered, with a little pause after the words. "I knew that letters had missed you," he went on. "Did you not know that she was dead?"

"Dead?" Marion repeated as the word came, and stood motionless.

"Ten days ago," he said, and again she started. Ten days before the dream had begun, and the figure had striven to reach her and could not.

"It is horrible," she said, with a gasp. "What shall I do?"

"You are terribly startled. I ought not to have told you so abruptly," he said, remorsefully.

"No, no," Marion answered, trying to recover herself. "Tell me more. I want to know it all. How is it that Miss Ryde did not send to me?"

"It came so suddenly at last that there was no time to send to any one," he answered, after a moment in which he looked at her anxiously. "Had you not better get back to the inn, though? I think the mist is rising. We can see some distance down the road."

"We will walk on a little; that will be better," Marion said, dreading return till she had heard the story, and they turned at once.

"She had been a trifle better," he went on, "but she could not endure to be left for a moment. The last week or two I lived at her side, and slept only as she made me lie down by her. The old horror was on her, the dread of the sea and the memory of that night in which my father and brother came to shore dead, and only I had lived after all his struggle. 'You have promised. You will never tempt it again,' she said over and over; and when I was silent her voice went on and on, 'Promise me, promise me,' till I hardly knew if I could still endure it. 'Not till you are ready to have me,' was all I could say, but

this was not enough. She knew what it meant, and tried desperately to make me pledge myself to forget America, and cleave to the home here.

"This went on day after day till the last. That afternoon she had been quite silent for an hour or two, only looking at me as I sat by her, with the same demand in her eyes, till suddenly the look changed. 'John, John,' she cried, but it was not I to whom she spoke. 'John! Was I wrong? I meant to be right,' and fell back dead."

He sighed, the long deep sigh of one coming from sharp pain. "I shall take her home," he said. "In her real mind that is what she would have wished. I sail on Saturday. I was coming to look for you. I needed to speak."

Marion walked on silently. The moment had come that for weeks she had known must come, and in the tumult of feeling that filled her she was conscious of but one thought. She would be firm. Nothing should break the resolution that she was aware now had been forming, and that must at any cost be kept.

"You know why I have come," he said. "I have waited till I could act freely and unhampered, — an impossible thing so long as that other soul seemed to draw its very life from me. It could not be helped. I know what you think and others, but I have never been able to see any other way. Now I am free. Marion, I must have you in my life. Give me yourself if you will."

As he spoke there came a swift brightening. Some sudden shifting of wind sent the breaking clouds crowding down the valley, till meadow and hillside and lake lay clear before them, and they saw a faint, watery sunshine striving behind the cloud. A stile close at hand led into the meadow, and here Marion sat down and for a moment shut her eyes. Why should she struggle, or protest, or refuse? What better life could come than one lived side by side with this soul, eager as her own to help, nobler in its renunciation and simple fidelity than any she had ever known? Why did he not compel her answer, instead of standing there eager yet silent, his eyes fixed upon her with a longing she dared not meet? For a moment she wavered. Then she remembered all that she had told herself as she waited. Why must she renounce a wish as dear to her as his could be to him? What safety could there be for the future, when, if she yielded, life would be a perpetual looking backward? Why would he not remain content with the rich inheritance ready to his hand?

"I cannot, no, I cannot," she cried passionately, rising to her feet. "There is something you love better than me. Give up this going home. Stay here, where everything claims you, and I will do all you ask."

"You love me, Marion!"

He put out his arms, and for a moment she yielded and felt the throbbing of his heart, and the tender pressure that meant the fulfilment of deepest desire. Then she struggled away.

"Oh, I am weak enough to yield at this moment," she said, "but I will not. I will be true to what I know must be. I have thought it all out over and over. How could I tell you so if your mother had not been bent that I should see with her? But I had to think. Here is where I belong. I knew it long ago. You believe I should come to your mind, but you do not know me. When the glamour is past,— it does pass,— how could you bear it? You would chafe and fret if I held you here. I should be wretched if you held me there. Let us be wise beforehand."

"Good God!" John Ballantyne said. "Can you mean that a mere fancy on your part is to stand between us?"

The words were ill chosen. Marion looked at him proudly.

"If I give that name to your own feeling, do you count it just?"

"But, Marion, my darling, don't you see how different the case is? I am an American to the core, and till now I have always had to reject my birthright. I must not, I cannot in honor, do it longer. You do not know what you ask."

"I ask nothing," Marion said. "I am not an old Greek, trained to think the State first and human ties of small account. It means much less to me than life as I can make it. To you it comes first."

"But it is the same really for both. You are let-

ting England divide us, when there is no question of natural allegiance, only this mysterious dislike, prejudice, call it what you will, inconceivable to me, even when I seek most thoroughly to put myself in your place. I must go home. I must take my place where I belong. Marion, try to think with me. Think what it means."

"I cannot change my thought at will. It has grown in me no less surely than yours in you. It is useless, John. You must go your way till your own eyes have seen, and then —"

"You are incomprehensible," he said, hotly. "If you love at all, how can you for one instant palter with it so?"

"And you?" she said, a trifle bitterly. "It is the woman's part to yield, I suppose, but the thing in me that speaks is my inmost sense. I have thought of it ever since I left you."

"You knew I loved you, Marion. You must have known it from the beginning."

"Yes, I knew it," Marion said simply, and again he caught her to himself.

"You knew it. You did not put away the thought. There is only one ending where love has come like that."

"In Arcadia, no," said Marion. "We are not in Arcadia. We are children of to-day. Do you think I will break your heart by holding you to a thing you would detest no less than I should detest what you demand? No. We are set apart. You must go

your way. I love you, but I will not hamper your life or my own."

"My God! Marion!" he said with a groan, for she had turned from him as if to go. "Have I not suffered enough? Do you mean to break my heart?"

"You will break mine if you go on. I cannot bear it," she said. "I am made to tell you this. Is n't it better to know it now than to find ourselves hopelessly at odds afterward?"

"Then compromise," he said, eagerly. "I must go, you know, but I will return. Not to stay, no, not to stay," for her face had lightened. "You yourself may change. In any case, Marion, I implore you call yourself mine till the year is over, and let me have the thought to live on till I come back to you."

Marion looked at him silently, her face pale as his, and met the tender, ardent eyes drawing her to him with a power so mighty that she flung out her hands with a cry.

"No, no! I must not. I will not. Be free. Leave me free. You will not change, nor I. I tell you we are set apart, and by your own will."

"Call it so if you will," he said at last, after a silence in which he searched her face in anguish, that gave place to fixed and quiet resolution, a look she knew well. "You cannot alter what is. I shall come back to you, and you will have to listen once more. God grant you then better knowledge of what love means. Be free as you like. I would not

be if I could. I am yours body, soul, and spirit, and till they dissolve I must be so. Good-bye, Marion."

For another moment he held her in his arms and kissed her solemnly, tenderly, as if death were parting them. Then he turned silently and went through the mist down the way to the valley, and Marion sat there till the sound of his footsteps on the rocky path had died away, and she knew that she was alone. Right or wrong, it was done. The old Puritan doggedness and insistence, its morbid conscience, its analysis and self-dissection, each and all in her inheritance, had worked together and driven from her what she knew well to be the best gift life would ever offer.

"It was for him, for him," she said at last, and wrung her hands, yet in the saying doubted herself, and so doubting went her way though the mist, following in footprints soon divided from her own, and leading far beyond any path her feet might follow.

Book II

Chapter First

EARLY September brought with it the winds of later autumn, and the passage was so stormy that, for a day or two, Ballantyne, heartily against his will, kept his berth and yielded to the enemy. On the third he staggered out, and up to the deck, on which a fine rain fell steadily, sky and sea alike merged in the long stretch of gray, through which the great ship forged uneasily ahead on the long slow swell of the waves through which she ploughed.

Even rain was welcome after the close state-room, whose port-hole the steward obstinately refused to open, with dark tales of what had happened to obstinate passengers who would have more air than the ship's rules allowed, and who had been swept out of berths, and otherwise knocked about by intruding and unexpected waves.

For a time he walked, seeking the sea legs he had been advised to find, and gradually learning how to adjust himself to the motion, though he was forced to intersperse it with occasional wild clutches at

ropes or railing, and sudden certainties that with this last lurch or plunge she had certainly overdone it, and must be on the way to the bottom. Memory was there, too, of the wild days and wilder nights, burned into every fibre of recollection, by his mother's insistent repetition. He had dreaded his own possible involuntary terror of the sea, as something utterly unmanly and contemptible, and rejoiced as he found that freedom had come and that he faced it with an indifference, born, it might be, of later and sharper sorrow, which now he resolutely shut away.

The ship was crowded with returning tourists, most of them at present given over to seasickness, a fact rather desirable than otherwise, since it left him quite free to pursue his own thoughts. By noon, however, there were faint gleams of sunshine, and he went in to lunch reluctantly, taking the place assigned with little note of his neighbors, till, a few moments later, when a pair entered and took places opposite him, the elder bowing easily with a suave and comprehensive good will which produced upon Ballantyne, for some inscrutable reason, a peculiarly irritating effect, a certain pervading unctuousness, being singularly offensive.

"A Mormon elder," he said to himself, after a moment's observation. "Very like the extraordinary one that argued his case before the Fabians. And yet —"

The doubt in his own mind increased as the voice

went on, a deep contralto, he would have called it, in a woman, full of soft, rich inflections and sudden rises and falls, to which the restless hands kept time. In spite of the instinctive shrinking which struck him as absolutely unreasonable, Ballantyne could not but watch the singular being, the doubt always a little stronger. There are men in whom the feminine is always uppermost. There are women whose masculine quality is in every act. In this case the blending was so balanced, that he had felt at first only the momentary uncertainty, which had no real reason. But as he looked there came, precisely why or how he could not have told, a conviction so strong that he sat back suddenly as if he had received an electric shock.

"Great Heavens! it is a woman!" He had nearly said it aloud. "It is a woman, and yet —"

"And yet," he was forced to add again, as half an hour later the pair rose and made their way toward their state-room. In that half-hour a dozen convictions had come and gone. A Mormon elder, a Franciscan monk out on a holiday, an artist who chose to masquerade, a woman warrior of the days of Tacitus, reincarnated, a diplomat whose eyes saw everything and whose tongue told only what he wished. It was an extraordinary head; masculine beyond doubt. The thick, crisp, close-cut flaxen hair, parted at one side, had no accompanying pink and white suggestion in complexion. The brows were strong and dark, the eyes dark, yet with hazel

lights, and a distinct touch of yellow in one, yet the power in them was contradicted by their unceasing restless scrutiny of all before them. The hands were peculiarly small and white, and used incessantly in gesture, as their owner talked rapidly and low with his companion, who answered languidly as if still oppressed by illness.

"A noble head," Ballantyne thought, noting the firm white neck and the fine pose of that and the shoulders. The brown robe, of monk it might be, shrouded the form completely, yet it might be no less the modification by feminine caprice of a garment more practically comfortable for a long sea voyage, than any modern ulster or close-fitting coat. Rope and rosary were banished, a heavy cord on both hood and as girdle carrying out the scheme. In any case it was efficient disguise. Long ago Ballantyne, in watching Rosa Bonheur at work, had recognized in her the rare type found here and there in all nations, — that in which all perception of distinctive sex has vanished, only the look, nobly human, remaining. In such case richest life has been lived, high thought, noble deed have moulded form and feature till they are of no time, but of a significance bearing the same interpretation for ancient and modern. Such life made the story of this head, had not the eyes denied much that it seemed to signify. This man in whom strange touches of woman quality showed at every turn, — this woman in whom the man was uppermost, which was it, and how should one determine? The nation-

ality was equally a puzzle. Russian he thought for a time, noting the strong resemblance to one of the best known women in the Russian colony in London, then, in surprise, German after all, as the low voice rose presently and showed that as the language spoken. But as a stray Frenchman, with the unhappy look most travelling Frenchmen wear, entered and took his place near them he was greeted in his own tongue so irreproachably that Ballantyne returned to his first conclusion.

"A man, of course. A polyglot elder; all things to all men. I hope there are no women in his troupe, poor things."

He watched the exit from the dining saloon. The step was free in spite of the long robe, the movement of one accustomed to active life. There was even a hint of martial carriage, a set of the shoulders that seemed to speak of drill. This was often seen in monasteries, and thus it seemed simple enough that the once soldier should bear the monk's robe more demonstratively than the cause demanded. Ballantyne returned to the deck a little irritated at the persistence with which the problem presented itself, and went down in time to dinner, determined to drop a matter which had no possible concern for him. The pair were already there. Ballantyne bowed as he took his place, and his *vis-à-vis*, taking this for an overture, instantly opened conversation in English no less perfect than his German. Ballantyne had more than once caught his eyes fixed intently upon him, and shrunk inwardly

from a certain power they contained. It was evident they could weigh and measure; that they knew what to seek and how to seek, and that they were not accustomed to any final thwarting of will, no matter what obstacles might lie between beginning and end of a quest. All the more he disliked and distrusted them, and in spite of many advances held himself aloof, watching the effect on the young man not much beyond boyhood, who listened to each word with fascinated absorption.

This was a type more familiar but hardly less marked. He had seen it among some of the Oxford men, but never before so fine or strong. The whole upper head was magnificently developed, the brow noble in every line, and the deep-set eyes were gray, with a curious unworldliness and innocence in their look, accented by the waving brown hair. Chin and mouth were sensitive and almost weak, but the nose had energy sufficient to override their indications. A little under medium height, the figure was firm and well knit, but face and figure alike were that of scholar and dreamer, not man of action.

"What will the elder do with him?" Ballantyne thought; and day by day he wondered more, attracted against his will, since the talk ran always in lines, once most beloved, but, since his college days, well nigh driven out of mind by crowding claims of new work. Green of Oxford was the prophet whose flag the younger man bore, but the elder answered him always with another name quite unknown; and as

Ballantyne heard incessantly, "But this is Donato's view. Now listen to what Donato has shown conclusively is so, and so, and so," he gave an involuntary attention which the elder man was quick to mark.

Gradually, and always against his inward will, he was drawn in, and found himself with them on deck eagerly discussing subtle points, and daily more and more impressed by the mass of knowledge on which the elder drew for illustration or final clinching of his flood of argument.

Pendleton Morris for the elder, Thomas Percival for the younger, he soon found were the thoroughly English names of his companions, though now and then a sudden rolling *r* betrayed a possible touch of Celt in the former's make-up.

The worship in Percival's eyes not only interested but often touched Ballantyne profoundly. He hung on the words of the elder man as a woman listens where her whole heart is given. It carried even a demand in its quality, as if this woman-side made its unconscious appeal for shielding and protection. Within a day or so it became plain also that he had a rival, for the young Frenchman had yielded to the spell which Morris seemed able to exert at will, and hung upon him with a more demonstrative absorption than Percival showed. Ethics and philosophy were by no means his forte. He resented the time spent upon them, but his blue eyes gleamed as he declaimed Hugo and De Musset, and Ballantyne found to his amazement that French poetry old and new were no

less a part of his elder's equipment, and that he responded to each hint of his new recruit with an enthusiasm and energy as thorough as his own.

Whatever motive or plan might be, and that motive and plan were always there Ballantyne felt certain, his pure delight in intellectual quality and in the play of his own wonderful power was no less clear. From early morning, far into the night, he walked the deck or sat down at random to expound lustily some new point, and when with him Ballantyne yielded more and more to the charm exerted, only when alone reverting to the earlier impression.

As time went on, and the tables and deck began to be filled, the restless red-brown eyes roved over the passengers, pausing here and there in approval, but for the most part with thinly veiled contempt.

"One learns to classify quickly at last," he said one day, noting Ballantyne's eyes upon him. "In a hundred there may be three, well if there be one, who has mind and soul enough to be moved by the highest thought. Look for yourself, though you hardly need that injunction. You are a sharper inquisitor than I. Now confess that you do not like me; that you study me and are doubtful, yet lean to mercy in spite of yourself."

He looked at him with the smile, apparently frank, in which the eyes this time had part, a fact not always the case. Now they flashed merrily as he met Ballantyne's silent look.

"Anglo-Saxon to the marrow," he said. "It is

the instinctive conflict of race, perhaps; the old story of Scot and Saxon."

"Then you are Scotch?"

"Without doubt," Morris returned, "though long wandering has made me a citizen of the world. Tongues are my passion no less than people. To understand the last there must be knowledge of the first. So I have lived in many lands, and learned their secrets as the key was given. It is Italy that brought me Percival here. I gather my recruits where I can."

"Ah," Ballantyne said, the words convincing him that his first surmise had been true. "Then you carry a propaganda with you?"

"Always."

"And its nature, if I may ask."

"Knowledge. I want only those who would know."

"What?"

"Life, law, themselves. Look about you. How many men or women here carry with them expression or possibility of such desire? Are they not all plainly in the state that Plato bewailed, and what better word for them than his? 'Is not a soul to be deemed halt and lame who hates voluntary falsehood, and is extremely indignant at himself and others when they tell lies, and yet receives involuntary falsehood, and does not mind wallowing like a swinish beast in the mire of ignorance, and has no shame of being detected?'"

"That is true for the masses everywhere," Ballan-

tyne answered. "It can hardly be true for America, with her diffusion of knowledge and the thought that made her and must underlie all her growth."

"America's chief thought, like that of your own country, my friend," said Morris, "is how most quickly to pile up shekels. I went to America twenty years ago, believing that such thought as institutions of men in this day could hold was in them. It was a youthful delusion. If you seek the same, go back to your own place before the wound comes to you that came to me. There is more real outreaching in little Italy, this hour, among her best, than in all the great Republic so near us now. Take a return steamer, unless you are bent on seeing for yourself; but if you will see, remember that you were warned."

"I shall not turn my back upon my own," Ballantyne answered. "I have heard such words before, but I cannot accept them. Whatever the surface show may be, my country, I am certain, keeps the inward spring still clear."

"Your country? To-be, you must mean. You will be less ready for nationalization presently."

"I do not need it. I am an American."

Percival burst into a ringing, boyish laugh at the utter stupefaction on Morris's countenance.

"Now you know the mental state of our German friend," he said; and went on to Ballantyne: "We were crossing a spur of the Apennines last spring, and fell in with part of an Italian regiment, so we marched with them and talked. Morris knows a lot of Italian

dialects, and talked with this one and that and a stray Spaniard as well. A German officer joined us after a bit, and I fell into that tongue till he got too much for me, and I called on Morris to explain some shade of meaning I had not caught. The German listened for a moment amazed at his expounding, and then held up his hands. 'Ach, Gott? Was für ein Landsmann ist das?' he said. But I am surprised as he. You have no American accent."

"I have lived in England since early childhood," said Ballantyne, hastily. "Now I am returning home to my own place."

"You have friends and relatives on this side, of course?"

"Next to none, and none that I know. I return because I belong here, not because any specific interests or obligations of family call me."

A quick glance passed between Morris and Percival, not unnoted by Ballantyne; but at this point, Regnault, whose English was very imperfect, conceived that attention had long enough been given to others, and broke in with some demand which ended in Percival's descending with him to the saloon. Ballantyne had turned away to render some slight service to a lady near him, and then fell to pacing the deck again, his tall figure and soldier-like bearing attracting admiring glances which passed quite unmarked by their recipient.

"Marion has another ally in this strange man," he thought. "It is most singular, this conviction which

he appears to think as inevitable as she, that only disappointment waits me. So be it. It is my business to face it whatever it is."

His eyes wandered as he went to a group near the door of the saloon with whom Morris was evidently renewing acquaintance, — an elderly lady of rather severe and critical aspect, ameliorated by a distinct flavor of worldliness, whose face thawed but slightly, though thaw was evident as she met the effusive greeting of Morris, who turned then to the younger pair with even greater flow of cordiality. There was a ripple of laughter and a flood of exclamations and wonder, hardly over when Ballantyne saw that he was beckoned to, and, much against his will, went forward to be presented at once to mother and daughters, there being no doubt whatever as to the American accent of the last. Their voices, however, were sweet and girlish, and he found himself studying their inflections, while they in turn listened to him with a deference, the usual American instinct toward any well-defined British product.

Morris looked on mischievously, delighted at their delusion ; and they chatted till Percival and Regnault reappeared, to be promptly presented and received with only a shade less cordiality than had greeted Ballantyne. The name, Barstow, he was sure his mother had talked of, but in just what connection he could not recall. In the face of the older girl was an occasional suggestion of Marion ; faint and intangible yet evident, and even, while vaguely resenting its pres-

ence there, he watched eagerly for the look to come. Mrs. Barstow talked well and bandied words with Morris, who, to his surprise, proved to have a reservoir of nonsense adapted to precisely such encounters, and laughed delightedly at every turn of the swift talk. It was impossible not to share it all and even light-heartedly for the time being, so contagious was the abounding vitality and cheer of this mysterious man, as to whom question and perplexity never ceased. A man of the world most certainly, and meeting these people of the same order on their own ground, yet, if words meant anything, they too summed up for him in the definition he had quoted. He changed countenance slightly as he chanced to meet Ballantyne's scrutinizing look, and as he passed him later on the deck said, hastily :

" Philistines all, but the best of their kind. They are one of the first families in Boston. You cannot know better. If that were your part of the country, now," — he paused interrogatively, — " you could be coached beyond belief. The old lady there has every pedigree at her fingers' ends."

" Pedigree ? " returned Ballantyne, in some amazement ; but Morris had shot back to his post, and was bowing and smiling and gesticulating with abnormal facility, and he joined them again presently, to listen to joint reminiscences of a Roman winter, and at last to an analysis of all to be expected on a return to Boston after a year's absence.

" Of course it will and must seem a little crude,"

Mrs. Barstow said, decisively. "That we are prepared for, though I confess there are certain compensations. Boston is more English than anything you will find among us," she added, turning to Ballantyne, who bowed gravely.

"I had supposed and hoped that it would be more genuinely American than any other point," he said. "Perhaps you mean, however, that it preserves more of the early spirit, and is thus a repetition of that phase of English force that founded it in the beginning."

"Hardly," returned the lady, slightly puzzled. "Of course the old families are devoted to anything belonging to those early days. But I hardly meant that. It is modern England of which I was thinking."

Ballantyne's eyes rested on her with a look she could not understand.

"Then the American idea is dying out?" he said.

"The American idea?" repeated the elder girl, with a little raising of her eyebrows. "I beg pardon, but you have been reading some political speech, Mr. Ballantyne."

Ballantyne's eyes darkened.

"It is difficult for me to understand American indifference," he said. "To belong to America seems to me so dear a birthright, that I find what I must count as a fad merely, incomprehensible. An Italian, a Frenchman, disdains the thought of claiming any other country for himself. Are you, with your noble inheritance, less patriotic than they?"

"Aggressive Americanism — the kind Dickens found with us — has gone out since good taste became more general," said Mrs. Barstow, severely. "It was never so rampant as he gave you to understand, but his associations were, while here, most miscellaneous, unhappily so."

"As I intend mine to be," said Ballantyne, quietly. "The Major Pogram type, I suppose, may still exist, but there must be some remnant of another, — that of the American citizen who is not ashamed to honor his native land."

"Oh, certainly, certainly," Mrs. Barstow returned, nervously, embarrassed by a significant look from Morris; and Ballantyne, hot with indignation, left them shortly, with a slight inclination which the daughters pronounced deliciously English.

"Most extraordinary," the mother murmured. "What has he been reading or hearing that has given him such a set of ideas!"

She looked suspiciously at Morris, whose countenance wore its most childlike and candid expression, but he gave her no enlightenment. Now and then, as he chatted, he cast a reflective glance toward Ballantyne, who had settled into his steamer chair with a book, and presently he left the group and descended to his state-room. Land was within twenty-four hours, and there were words still to be spoken that needed more of the thought he had already given.

Chapter Second

BALLANTYNE, who had argued himself into repentance for a show of feeling, too much on the order of breaking a butterfly, gave another hour of after-dinner chat to the Boston party, who went below as the wind freshened,— a wind that urged them forward, and that would send them by early morning easily into port.

A keen excitement throbbed in his veins, of which his quiet face gave no token. To sleep was impossible, and he paced up and down the deck more and more restless. He began to realize now his practical aimlessness. No fixed plans had been made beyond the immediate journey to Nantucket and the laying his mother among their own kin, and now he strove to settle definitely his course for the coming months.

After Nantucket, what? A cousin in St. Louis and one in Chicago were possible objective points, and Boston certainly held kinsfolk, who, however, if they shared the development which had expatriated Marion and spoke in the words of the Barstow family, could hardly aid him in the acquirement of any real knowledge.

From day to day he had looked curiously at the men on board, finding a large element of prosperous, comfortable, well-fed subjects, differing little, save for a slightly more alert expression, from the same class in London. He had met their order season after season, and knew well what they represented. He had knowledge no less accurate of the more aggressive and pushing type, the American, for his own generation incurably, ineradicably vulgar, but leaving behind him an ameliorated product, — a generation often developing into finer forms. How it would be to deal with them in the mass he hardly dared to consider.

For the moment the temptation came upon him to travel as Englishman rather than American, and take the side presented to him in this way, letting his own conclusions rule, but accepting what people seemed ready to offer as their own estimate of the thing to be judged.

"Evidently I am to be both," he thought at last, indignation and amusement contending within him, "and thus have a double opportunity of seeing both sides of everything."

He looked up as he ended, and saw Percival making his way toward him.

"May I join you?" he said in his gentle voice, as he came nearer. "The last night out is fairly certain to be a restless one, and I am as curious as you must be to know what this strange land has to offer. I heard an American a few minutes ago insist that he had caught in some cross-current of wind the perfume

of ripe cornfields, something purely American, he claimed, but I was not competent to judge."

"It is your first crossing, then?" Ballantyne asked, wondering how he happened to be alone, and also at a very perceptible nervousness of manner which he was evidently trying to shake off.

"Yes, the first," he said, after a moment, and went on: "We all part so soon that I want to say one or two things that have been uppermost in my mind ever since our real talks began. Morris always objected, and said there was time enough; but this is my affair really, rather than his. I want you to join us. Not at once, for I understand you intend to travel somewhat; but after a little. I want you to think of us as representing something you may by and by like to look at; as representing something you may be glad even to fall back upon."

He had lost all nervousness as he spoke, and looked at Ballantyne with his clear eyes as if he had the right to expect interest.

"What is 'us'?" the latter asked.

"A community to be; now, only a few of like mind. 'The Brotherhood of the New Day.'"

"I know no new day," Ballantyne answered, slowly. "The best things in any generation have been from the beginning. The name itself is an exclusion of our whole inheritance."

"But you must grant," Percival said, eagerly, "that all progress consists in a modification, a rearrangement of old forms into newer, more available shape. The

many cleave to the old, are bound by custom and tradition, and remain bond slaves till death. This is one class; and rich and poor alike are in it, because it includes all the unthinking. Then comes the pure materialist, who wants nothing, and affirms nothing beyond what his microscope or his chemical tests will give him. In his own fashion he is no less bound than the first. Last, you have the few to whom insight has been granted, and who must work together toward such ends as it is possible to realize. There is no less chance for high purpose, for consecration, than in those elder days we count so precious and so impossible to reproduce."

"But this is the aim of the church; of unions of all sorts, from socialism up and down," said Ballantyne. "Why do you need a fresh organization or revamping of names?"

"Because the time has come when the few who know must band together and live their lives untouched by the mass of lower aims. The church, you must know, modern philanthropy, civilization, as we use the word, each and all are benumbing, deadening forces. All the beauty and color of life are washed out in the flood of dreary common-schooling and the hideous monotony of working life. We want a new basis. We want the union of beauty in all its most glorious forms, with a life of service and high thought. We are all earners as well as students, but we believe each can help the other."

"A co-operative scheme, then?"

"Yes, in part, but differing from the ordinary communal arrangement in that we affirm our own individuality, and the rights of each as against the tyranny of any whole. It is a declaration of freedom we sign, not a contract of subjection to the many."

"You have tried it, then?"

"Not here; no. But there is a small society in London which owes its life to Morris's theory. We worked it out together in Italy, or rather he worked it out, allowing me to follow his thought; and I went back for a winter and began in his lines, after he had himself been with us a short time and laid the foundations. It aims to include the advantage of monastic seclusion in freedom for thought and study, without the monastic incubus of religious formalism, and with the family permitted or not excluded, though the time for that has not yet come, I believe."

"Then women have a future rather than a present share?"

Percival looked up hastily. Something in Ballantyne's tone struck him as peculiar, and the steady eyes fixed upon his face held something he could not fathom.

"He knows nothing. Perhaps I do not know myself," was Ballantyne's inward comment. "I am more certain and less certain with every day."

"Women?" Percival said, a little vaguely. "Oh, yes. There are a housekeeper and maids, of course. But now that you know a little of our aims, will you

not come and see for yourself? The place is back of New York somewhere; Morris will tell you; an old house he found in his tramps through what, he says, is an unknown country. It is easy of access, as it would have to be for his lectures."

"Then he lectures? On what?"

"Did you not know it?" Percival asked, in surprise. "He has two specialties, — Greek art and Italian philosophy. He is a remarkable linguist."

"Does that bring with it comprehension of ancient art?" Ballantyne asked, with an irritation he recognized as quite unreasonable.

"With a common man it might make against it," Percival answered, simply. "He has the gifts of a host. He has lived in Greece, and belongs to all the archæological societies as an accepted authority, and he knows Rome also, almost as well as Lanciani himself. He has studied in Italian monasteries; lived with the monks, and knows more of mediæval philosophy, church and otherwise, than any man alive. One canto of Dante with him gives you the heart of the Middle Ages. I have felt that you did not understand him. Many do not, and I wanted you to know the purity of his aims and something of what you would hardly gather from him save incidentally."

"He is fortunate in his friends," Ballantyne said with compunction, as the absurdity of his prejudice again came over him. "But you are bringing in alien elements to a country whose gospel is to the poor. It seems to me anti-American."

"On the contrary," Percival replied, eagerly, "it is because Morris believes in the restoration of the original American idea; because he feels that the sense of what a real citizenship involves and means must be learned again, that he would bring together men who can be trained to understanding of what a state implies. I am ardently republican in thought. I could not tolerate a scheme that excluded it. At least come for a little and see what we mean."

"Very well," Ballantyne answered, moved and drawn, as he had been from the beginning, by the personal quality of the speaker, "I will come. You may depend upon it," for Percival had looked at him with a little doubt. "You must tell me how to find you. It will be interesting to see how you are working out your scheme. Your share at least can mean nothing but good."

"Whatever it means, or may mean, owes any good in it first of all to Morris," he said, earnestly. He had searched for a card, and now they exchanged addresses, and parted for what remained of the night.

Fog veiled the harbor, as they steamed slowly in the next morning, and thus prevented any impressions but those of discomfort; and in the general confusion of landing, the delay of custom-house, and all that torments the newly arrived, he chose a hotel almost at random. Firm ground was a luxury sufficient for the hour; but after lunch, energy awakened, and he gave the afternoon to verifying certain memories, possession of which he had felt must be

his. A pocket-map aided him when once the points of the compass were settled, and thus it happened that, having wandered into the neighborhood of Louisburg Square, he suddenly recalled that one of the old household lived here — a cousin of his father's, whose occasional letters his mother had always dreaded, since their charm made another strand in the slender cord that bound them to America.

A year or more had passed without word of any sort, and he rang the bell and asked for Mrs. LeBaron, uncertain even as to whether she still lived, and happy in being told that she was at home and would see him. As he waited, he looked about with vivid curiosity. A work-basket in a corner was the only token of feminine occupation. For the rest, it was the room of student and book lover, a few good pictures and a very perfect cast of the Venus de Milo being the only adornments. The great oak table in the centre of the room was filled with new books, reviews, and periodicals, and a set of exquisitely carved chessmen was set out as if some problem were under study. He recalled now that her husband had been interested in one of the Boston daily papers, and, till his health failed, for some years its editor-in-chief, and he remembered that since her widowhood they had been told most of her income came from general literary work, always unsigned.

The bell rang before his kinswoman appeared, and as he stood there examining the carving of the white queen, quick steps ran up the stairs, and Morris

entered the room with a breezy rush, as if on most familiar ground, pausing in profound amazement as he saw Ballantyne.

"Well, John, and is it you really?" a voice said, and he turned to see the stately figure and noble head of a woman well beyond middle life, who looked from one to the other in momentary surprise, going forward then with both hands extended, and with a peculiarly sweet, bright smile.

"John Ballantyne the card had prepared me for," she said, "but Pendleton Morris is hardly a less surprising apparition. You do not come together, do you?"

She shook hands as she turned to the latter, who burst into profuse explanation.

"Boston *via* Liverpool is sometimes easier to one than *via* New York," he said. "Threads tangle, and hold fast, wherever one elects to settle, and my web is spun closest on Hudson Heights. But I am curious enough to wonder what brings you to this old friend of mine," he added, turning to Ballantyne with his frankest smile.

"Kinship," Mrs. LeBaron said, quietly. "We are cousins once removed."

Morris's uneasy eyes darted from one to the other.

"You are absolutely unlike," he said indifferently, and fell at once into question as to the doing of Boston in the year since he had seen it.

"I had just this half-hour," he said at last. "The cab is below that brought me here, and we take the

steamboat train for Fall River. I have come back with my prize."

"Young Percival, I suppose you mean?"

"Then you have not forgotten," he cried. "I remember I showed you his portrait. He is in the cab, but was rather shaky and uncertain as to footing, and I left him there. You know we all step high for a day or so after shipboard. May I bring him up for a moment?"

He was gone as he spoke, and back again, presenting Percival with an effusiveness at which the young man colored like a girl. Mrs. LeBaron met him with quiet, friendly ease, but Ballantyne, who was watching them all with a curious eagerness, as if it were an intermediate scene in a play, to lead up to something impossible to guess, saw that her eyes rested on him with pity as well as interest, and that Morris noted it, and looked resentfully at her.

"The Philistine still battles with the child of light," he said, half aside. "You cleave to Boston so closely, my friend, that you will never give me opportunity to show you the likable side of her rival."

"I know no rival," she answered, lightly. "We are of one order, and your chosen place of another. Rivalry does not rise between absolutely alien elements."

"I would defeat your position if we had two more minutes," Morris said, gayly. "Come, Tom, we have barely time."

"If you were nearer, I should say, come to me

when you want to talk over your impressions," Mrs. LeBaron said, as she looked earnestly at young Percival, who, in turn, had met her eyes, as if he wished that better knowledge were possible. Then, in the deluge of words, he was hurried away, and Mrs. LeBaron, who looked after them with a clouded face, turned cordially to Ballantyne.

"I was thinking of you to-day," she said. "Now and then sudden temptations come to try this wide sea, and what may wait on the other side, but I do not need to now that you have come to me. How is it that you are alone? I thought that when you did come, your mother would be with you. Is it so?" she added gently, as a look in Ballantyne's face answered her.

"I am bringing her with me," he said. "I am on my way now to Nantucket."

"Not at once?"

"To-morrow, unless some reason for delay arises."

"You will stay here with me to-night, will you not?" she asked, after a little silence in which she looked at him with friendly eyes, "unless, indeed, you may prefer the hotel, which I hope you will not."

"Here, by all means, if I may," Ballantyne answered, with a sense of rest and comfort long unknown.

Reserved and calm as she seemed in manner, her eyes held deep sympathy, and in her voice, rich and full in tone, was also a gentle, benignant quality,

that moved him like music. It was impossible to think of her as a stranger, and she, in turn, looked at him with an interest seldom so deeply roused.

"Simon can be sent over for whatever you require," she said; and Ballantyne wrote the necessary order, and gave it to the discreet and grizzled African who had answered the bell.

"You will have to be contented with a mere box of a room for the night," she said, "which, of course, I ought to have told you beforehand. Now you have no choice. You know that, as one of my various means of living, I have with me three of the young fellows my husband trained. They are all on the paper, and the sister of one of them also; but they are a little erratic in the matter of time, as newspaper folk must be, though tolerably certain to be here punctually at dinner. This is the old house, and to keep it at all, that seemed to be the most practical method. Simon and his wife leave me very little real responsibility."

"Then it is possible I shall see some genuine Americans," he said. "I had begun to believe the race was dying out."

"Not in this house, thank God! No, nor in many another you shall know," said Mrs. LeBaron, with fervor. "I protest perpetually against the present craze for everything English. Why can we not take your best and ignore the rest? I want all that literature and art can give, but your Philistinism seems to me a more offensive type even than ours."

"I object to your pronouns," Ballantyne said, with a smile; "I have come home and refused to be classed under the head 'British' or 'Philistine.' Do you disown me?"

"Hardly. A recruit on my side who at the same time may serve as model of the 'howling swell' some of my young people adore, is something unexampled."

"What am I to do? What do I do?" said Ballantyne, laughing, but with some irritation. "How am I different? Tell me, that I may change it."

"You cannot. You have come up in an atmosphere of leisure. Do you ever hurry? Can you conceive yourself eating a lunch in five minutes, or rushing to catch a car and save a minute and a half? You sit still, whereas the American cannot. There is repose about you. No, you have simply returned to the original type, for, after all, we are English too, of purer blood, if Freeman tells the truth, than most of those who stayed behind."

"But this does not tell me how to change."

"No, nor will it. I want no change. It is the spirit that is the real thing, and we can let differences drop. Do you hear that rush? Thank Heaven, there is one young fellow left who whistles without any conviction of glaring impropriety — whistles like a lark."

"Evidently you are a sort of elegant Bohemian," Ballantyne said, as she looked expectantly toward the

door. A curly black head was thrust in for a moment, and dancing black eyes carried the tune the lips had dropped.

"Pardon," he said, "I can't help it when I see the old house. It 's heaven after that pandemonium over there on Washington Street. Jack and I are here, and Julian is on the way with Margaret. You will have us all to-night."

He turned without having seen Ballantyne, who sat in the shadow, and in a moment other voices sounded in the hall.

"This is the bright hour of the day," Mrs. LeBaron said. "I could hardly live my life without these young people. You will not mind, John? We shall have the evening to ourselves."

"On the contrary," he said, "I shall enjoy it all;" and then as she left him sat resting till roused by the sound of an instrument of some sort the one clear, high note of which seemed to melt in a thousand silvery shades, and die away so slowly that the waves still vibrated as he rose to seek their source.

"It is as ravishing as the verger's 'howl' in the Baptistery at Pisa," he said, meeting Mrs. LeBaron at the door; "Americans bring home everything, they say. Have you a bit of the echo?"

"Something better, since it does not depend on the life of that particular verger. It is the gift of a Burmese missionary; a gong used at the sacred shrines, though to call it gong is opprobrious. See; it is a crescent of many metals, silver the chief, but

all blended in curious layers, the secret of the priests. The sound whispers on, long after you think it ended."

She had brought the crescent, and as Ballantyne looked at it with curiosity, the group entered, and, when introductions were over, went down to the dining-room.

A slight constraint ruled for a little, but as Mrs. LeBaron chatted on it soon melted away, and eager talk began. Margaret Howard, who sat next him, was simply a blond copy of her dark and vivacious brother Ralph, and chatted and laughed to the silent but appreciative content of her neighbor Brownson, a pale and critical-looking young fellow with the expression which Ballantyne later came to know technically as "the Harvard look."

His companion, Ashton, was neutral, whity-brown seeming to be the tint of eyes, hair, clothes, and complexion; but now and then a keenly penetrating look fell upon one or another speaker: and Ballantyne, who found it at intervals meeting his own, settled that the balance of power for the four was really here.

They lingered over the coffee till eight chimed from some bell tower not far away, separating then for the evening engagements, and Ballantyne followed Mrs. LeBaron into the study, and fell at once into the story her questions prompted. They talked long, but not till they had separated for the night did it occur to him that in all their discussion of old plans no word had been said of Morris and the "Brotherhood of the New Day." He would ask her in the

morning what she really knew of him, and what his motives and standing were; and if he had misinterpreted him, learn to do him justice; and he fell asleep with a vision of young Percival's face, which melted into Marion's, losing itself in the mocking, restless eyes of Morris.

Chapter Third

BALLANTYNE slept heavily, and found to his surprise, on descending next morning, that his hostess had gone in an early train to Plymouth, called there by the sudden illness of a sister. He had barely time to catch his own train, but Simons had ordered a cab, and gave him a note from his cousin, in which she begged him to keep her aware of his movements, and come to her on his return to Boston.

For the first hour, Ballantyne studied the country, then gave himself to the work of drawing some fellow-passenger into conversation, a proceeding received with that mixture of suspicion and reserve which is often the characteristic of the travelling American at home. In England, he reflected, with puzzled pondering over differences, strangers fell into easy and ready talk; while here, on his own ground, he was eyed with profound question as to his motives in speaking at all.

In course of time, an elderly man in a white cravat asked him as to the state of religion in his district, deciding that only interest in men's souls could warrant his attempts; and while a youth in the rear

chuckled at Ballantyne's surprise, a neighbor changed places and made a prolonged examination of all three. The result was favorable to Ballantyne, with whom he soon fell into confidential talk as to the mortgage on his son-in-law's farm, and the general condition of real estate on the Cape; nor did it end till the dock was reached and he had seen this most unusually interested listener go on board the Nantucket boat.

September twilight was settling down as Ballantyne stepped ashore, to be at once captured by the only representative of the only hotel open. With the first keen winds the summer boarder had vanished, and the island was its natural self till June came again. He wandered about the old town in the moonlight, puzzled like all strangers as to why the houses turned their backs upon the sea, and trying to remember which had been his grandfather's. But the great kitchen and black Amy frying doughnuts were his only vivid impressions of this, for he had been on the island but once in his childhood, and that just before they sailed on that last and most disastrous voyage.

With morning and clear sunshine he made his way to the gravedigger's, the house having been pointed out to him at the hotel, whose proprietor watched him till out of sight with much wonder as to his errand. He found a silent and inscrutable-looking old man, who eyed him suspiciously as if he were a probable pirate seeking aid to bury stolen treasure, but who thawed into sudden facility of speech as he heard his name.

"I want to know! You don't say! Pretty Laury Prince come home ag'in to be buried. Well, well. You must come in an' talk it over with Azuby; that's my wife. She set great store by Laury. You won't come in? Well, I'll go on, then."

Azuba's rheumatism and the decay of the town filled the way till the graveyard was reached and he had measured off the space, and made a few strokes at a stone too large for his spade to manage.

"This here bowlder," he said, as he leaned back against the rough granite; "do you know now, this bowlder took every hoss in town to get it up? Might 'a' been one o' the Pyramids for the fuss it was; an' now it 's here, 't ain't nothin' but a bowlder, with 'John Ballantyne' cut big, an' 'Philip Ballantyne, his son,' cut little. There 's room for more of ye. Take that bowlder now as it stands, an' three generations of Ballantynes might be on it besides the two that is, but ain't under it. I hain't never heerd exactly whether you got the corpse or not. If you did, you 'd ought have brought him along, too, as well 's your ma. Folks seemed to think 't was n't jest the thing for him to be in one place an' the stun in another; but there! I suppose maybe over there 't ain't looked at the same way. Now, me, I could n't rest easy off Nantuck. You don't feel that way?"

"I have not lived here all my life, you know," Ballantyne answered.

"Well, there ain't a place to beat it," the old man

went on, with a final blow that sent the troublesome stone rolling down the hill. "I know, for I've sailed all seas, and seen all colors of skin. Be you goin' to have anythin' said when it comes time to fill up? There's a woman minister that some of 'em fancies, but for the most part I'd ruther hev Quakers an' no fuss onless the Sperrit moves 'em, an' mostly it ain't very apt to. You can't be no ways certain what way the Sperrit will take."

The old man rambled on as he dug, till his head was lost to view, emerging at intervals to make some statement demanding special attention, and at last pointed back to his own house.

"You're kind o' beat out, seems to me," he said. "Why don't you go down there a spell an' rest? Tell Azuby who you be, an' you can talk things over. Never seems fair for her not to know things soon as me."

Ballantyne shook his head.

"You need n't be afraid there ain't time before the coffin can git here. Hiram's a master hand to poke, an' his father's another. Hiram 'll hev to drag him out o' the cap'n's room anyhow. They're a shifless lot in there, if I do say it, loafin' all day an' tellin' stories, an' more lies wove in each time they tell 'em. Why, Cap'n Hiram says to me only yisterday, 'Cummings,' he says — "

The rest was lost as Cummings gave himself once more to his work, though a sound of muffled narrative still rose from below, and Ballantyne watched the

slow progress of the horses through the sandy way and up the slight ascent to the graveyard. He shared his mother's deep dislike of funeral ceremonies, but in spite of this felt reproached as Captain Hiram presently drew near and looked at him from under his bushy eyebrows.

"They 've told me who you be," he said. "I knowed your father and your grandfather before him, an' you favor them both, but I did n't ever expect I 'd live to help lay your mother away, an' not one of her own townsfolk to do her honor. 'T ain't the right kind of a way, seems to me."

"She wished it so," Ballantyne said, gently; and Captain Hiram, after another look, nodded understandingly.

"What a woman wants she wants," he said, "an' dead or alive don't make much odds. You can't go ag'in the dead, whatever you do to the livin'. It always seemed to me it had ought to be the other way, for the livin' mind an' the dead don't, though 't ain't always so, for I could tell you a story — "

"Father! for the land's sake!" interrupted young Hiram. "This ain't a wake for you to yarn it twenty-four hours on a stretch. It 's a funeral. Won't you be quiet till we get the remains in?"

Captain Hiram looked defiantly at his son, his grizzled brows working fiercely, but fell into silence; and again Ballantyne wished, as he had often done, that death might be simply a vanishing, a melting away, with no miserable detail of outward observ-

ance, or alien hands to mar the thought of the larger life attained. He had turned away to pace up and down among the graves, and now, as the last shovelful was thrown out, lent a hand as the three men lowered the coffin to its bed and strewed the sprigs of cedar he had gathered from one of the wind-tossed trees. It was over at last. Weary body and troubled spirit were alike at rest, and he was free for such life as might come. Must it still hold only renunciation, or would it shape itself according to his will?

Captain Hiram had bared his grizzled head, and muttered some words ending clearly, "in the hope of a sure and certain resurrection."

"You don't mind," he said, apologetically. "I 've had to say 'em over many a poor fellow with weights at his heels and head. She won't lie the harder for 'em. You was a good son, I know by the look of ye, an' it comes to each of us turn about to bury, an' then be buried. Now I want you to come home with me an' take a bite. My wife knew her an' your father best of all, an' she 'll want a talk. You don't mind, do ye?"

Ballantyne had drawn a deep breath, in which a burden seemed to roll away. For the moment he felt guilty, as if unfaithful to a lifelong trust.

"At least now she understands, and can pardon," he thought, and turned to the old captain, who waited expectant and uncertain.

"No, indeed, I shall be very glad to go," he said, and went his way with him.

This was Ballantyne's real introduction to Nantucket. Captain Hiram led him from house to house, introduced him to the sacred precincts of the "captain's room," and he found at all points, not only welcome, but the full flavor of a life unique even yet, and with every sharp characteristic still untouched by the modern march. The old houses, hermetically sealed to the casual visitor, opened their widest to this son of names still honored. Not Guernsey or Sark itself had sharper individuality; and Ballantyne settled into contented acceptance of all that came, delighting and amazing them by his familiarity with local traditions and history and his love of all that the old island represented.

So a fortnight passed, and then he chanced one afternoon upon a son of the island back for a passing look at the old homestead, and off again in a day or two on his duty as factory inspector.

"If you want to see what New England has really come to," he said, after a shrewd look from his gray eyes had been followed by a few leading questions and an evident summing up of conclusions, "you 'd better come with me. You 'll find New Ireland uppermost, and a considerable touch of New France in the shape of French Canadians. Able-bodied New England has dumped itself into the West, and if the labor men tell the truth, some of them would n't mind trying home soil again."

"I have heard that more than once," Ballantyne replied.

"Then you heard the truth. They'd be back here too, I believe, if interest on mortgages did n't swallow up profits so, they've nothing left to come home with. Hear the bonanza farm men talk and you'd think there was n't a poor man possible, West or East. You'll see plenty of them as you go. If you want the inside of things, you must look up the Labor Bureau men. They've got heads most of them, and are not afraid to use them. Size up Massachusetts and you've got the run of New England, though we're a little ahead on factory legislation. But it takes a sharper lookout than you might think to get ahead of the dodges. What do you say?"

"That is just such a chance as I want," Ballantyne replied, heartily.

"You'll have to rough it considerable. I suppose you're ready for that? They'll take you for another of those prying Englishmen you run into, poking round everywhere to see what we Yankees are at, and how we're at it."

Ballantyne could have wished for a trifle more silent travelling companion, but there was no other objection. Buckley's comments were a mingling of shrewdness and worldly wisdom, with great good-heartedness. He had moments of strong indignation for any glaring injustice on either side, and, in the weeks of travel that followed, and the daily talks with operatives of every grade as well as with manufacturers themselves, Ballantyne gained much curious

knowledge of factory and farm life and the irreconcilable conflict between them.

To the owners it was always certain that he represented English capital seeking investment, a supposed desire, met sometimes jealously, but as often cordially. The perennial astonishment, as he avowed his nationality, had ceased to torment him as in the beginning, and he began to feel that he understood Massachusetts, a trifle daunted as he reflected on the number of stars in the United States flag, and the necessities involved if each one were dealt with in like fashion.

At intervals he had written to Mrs. LeBaron, who had begged him to come to her for Thanksgiving, compromising at last on Plymouth and the old house which still kept its colonial state, though occupied only by the two maiden sisters, who represented all that was left of the family once overflowing every room in the homestead.

To be quite sure that as much of the ancient character of the day was given as might be, Mrs. LeBaron went down with Simon a day or two beforehand, and her young people followed her at the appointed time. Here Ballantyne renewed acquaintance; ate his first pumpkin pie, dubiously at first but with final acceptance, and studied the house, from oak-beamed parlor to attic rafter.

Ashton had met him with unexpected cordiality, and as, after dinner, they took the prescribed walk to Plymouth Rock, told him that the paper had decided

to send him to St. Louis and one or two other Western points for a look at the labor difficulties, and that this might be an opportunity, if he inclined, for another phase of his investigation.

"Kansas mortgages are part of it also," he said, "and you will find St. Louis a desirable addition to your labelled specimens, a much more distinctive one than Omaha."

"My fancy of both is Indian trading-posts," Ballantyne answered, with a laugh, "but I happen to know better. I have had a philosophical quarterly from St. Louis, and I know the earliest and best work in manual training, so far as we are concerned, was begun there."

"That is the German element," Ashton replied, promptly. "Yankees have had very little time thus far for metaphysics, since the days of the theological rows here in New England; but German thought there is strong and seems to have drawn in and incorporated all the studious element. You will find it rich pasturage. I may have to take a run down to New Orleans. Shall you like that also?"

"In every way," Ballantyne answered heartily, putting out his hand to Ashton, who grasped it with a sudden flush of pleasure.

"We newspaper men," he said, "skitter over the surface of things like water flies, but we come to know how to go deeper at times. The deep water I shall leave to you, and I am not quite disinterested, for your eyes, I fancy, will see some things to which

mine are custom-sealed. You will be invaluable, for we live always to find a new point of view."

"When it is all over, remember that Boston has not yet been put in your scales," said Mrs. LeBaron, when she had listened, well pleased, to the new plan. "Really you should have taken it first, though, after all, Nantucket was an excellent beginning. Now tell me the end of it all. When you have weighed and measured and sifted, where is the cake to be baked and eaten? In Boston, I hope, and somewhere near me."

They had lingered over the fire in the great Franklin stove, with its monumental urn and polished brasses, the young men having gone up in the evening train with Margaret, who also could not take full holiday; and the ancient sisters, accustomed to the earliest of hours, had yielded easily to their cousin's suggestion, and, with many cautions as to fire, trotted away to bed. Ballantyne had stretched himself in a deep lounging-chair, his hands clasped above his head, and the firelight playing on his serious face and deep eyes.

"Who knows?" he said, half abstractedly, turning slightly more toward her, and noting again the underlying sadness of eyes, and the lines of pain about the mouth. Hers had been an ideal marriage, his mother had said. There had been no children, and the closest of unions had been closer every year. Yet bravest patience marked her life, he knew, and spoke loudest in all she left unsaid; and he looked at her with fresh

admiration, and the sympathy that could not yet be spoken.

"If I am not too curious," she said, after a little silence, in which she had watched his falling back into thought, "tell me what is to determine it."

"There is always the one answer to a crucial question, I suppose," he answered slowly, after a moment in which he had hesitated, — "a woman's word."

"Then it will take you home again," she said, regretfully. "Why could you not have waited to try what charm might lie in our American girls?"

Again he hesitated, but the instinct toward confidence was strong. At least she knew what love meant, and had proved it. She might even help.

"If you will not mind a long story," he said, and now he sat upright and faced her, "I think I would like to tell you the whole."

"You are very good. Nothing could make me happier than such willingness," she said quietly, and he told her; at first with stumbling and difficulty, so long had silence been the law for all personal experience; at last with deepest relief, as her intent listening drew him on.

"It is strange that I have not thought of it before, but you must know her," he said. "You Cape and Nantucket people seem bound so closely together. Her father was Gardiner Lacy."

"Is it possible!" said Mrs. LeBaron, in deep surprise. "I know her, yes, but only of late years, for

her father was almost a hermit. I knew, too, of her turning her back upon all interests here, to the consternation of her aunt. By the way, you crossed with her; the Barstow party, you know. That is the Aunt Theodosia with whom she lived after her father's death."

"Then that is the look for which I could not account on the oldest daughter's face," Ballantyne said, surprised, and fell into silence from which he presently roused.

"I am beginning to understand better how her mind may have worked," he said; "but I shall not know certainly, till more is done."

"Shall you tell her so?"

"Not yet. I am pledged to say nothing more till the year ends. I shall not even write her, though to promise this would have been impossible if I had not known that my old friend, and her new one, Miss Ryde, would keep me aware of her life, for they are much together. How will it be? You who know life so well, tell me what you think. Will she be obstinate?"

"It is obstinate blood," Mrs. LeBaron said, "and she has a theory which, in Nantucket hands, carries strange compulsion. But if she loves you, and you tell me she admits it, time may do what you cannot. Let her quite alone, dear boy."

The words came involuntarily as she met his wistful look.

"There is but one message for you and for me,"

she said after a moment, "and that is the word that holds the sternest command human hearts can hear or seek in patience to obey, — wait."

She had risen as she spoke, and her eyes as they rested on the young man's troubled face were full of sudden longing. He put out his hand, and for a moment she held it close; then bent and gently kissed his forehead.

"There was no son for me," she said, "but your father's child could hardly fail to seem like one. Good night. I am glad you have told me. We will wait together, I for the end, and you for the beginning."

Chapter Fourth

MARCH winds were blowing when John Ballantyne again saw Boston. The Western journey had prolonged itself and might have gone on indefinitely, for the letters which Ashton had sent back were of so marked a character and excited such general interest and attention, that the editor-in-chief soon saw reason to count it as one of the most successful ventures since the early days of the paper and its popularity.

Ashton alone, though his ability ranked high, might not have brought such result, but he had rightly divined that with Ballantyne's eyes added, the result was likely to be an unexpected *coup*. Again and again, as he revised his own version in the light of facts or theories his companion brought to bear, he said:

"See here, Ballantyne; this is your work, not mine. Write your own letter. I regard this as a piece of cheating. If you won't let me own up now, I shall when I am back again. You are a born correspondent. Why don't you take to it?"

"Because I am, at present, moonlight to your

sunlight," Ballantyne said, with a laugh, "does not prove I shall not by and by go into permanent eclipse. Just now as I see things, I happen to fit the scheme of your paper, but if I veered a little, where should I be? No; I am afraid that journalism, unless I own all the stock, is not for me."

"I cannot understand you," said Ashton, throwing himself back in his chair. They were in a Kansas village, a city on the map which hung in the bar-room of the wretched little hotel where they had been storm-stayed, and where both had taken the opportunity to fill out their notes.

During the long journey they had become excellent friends, Ashton's quiet, judicial habit of mind being balanced by a somewhat saturnine humor, which became lighter in quality as acquaintance grew into real friendliness and even intimacy. Ashton was a Cornell graduate, and thus, as he said, lacked the fine, *paté-de-foie-gras* flavor which distinguished Harvard, but he was a far more thorough student than either Howard or Bronson, and the keenest of observers. Mugwump himself, his paper, though claiming catholic liberality, was violently Republican, and thus he had been forced to omit or qualify some phases of his record, gnashing his teeth at the necessity. Ballantyne's opinion weighed with him more and more, and he looked at him now seriously as if he would force some explanation of his methods of thought.

Ballantyne had looked up as he spoke, and waited

for more. The active life had agreed with him, and he seemed younger and far less careworn than when the rough journey began.

"If you don't make a book," Ashton went on, "and if you will and can use them, I turn over my note-books with enthusiasm. What gain is there in the sort of winter you have spent? There must be an aim, for you are the last man to work without one."

"Then you do not find a general understanding aim enough?"

"Yes, if you mean to go into politics or journalism. Otherwise, what earthly difference does it make to you how many small farmers are being killed out by the bonanza farms, or how many grinding brokers are fattening on Western mortgages? It's poor stuffing for such pillows as yours. This isn't the season to travel for picturesqueness; and if it were, you are at present on the wrong ground. Was there ever anything more infernally hideous than the wooden boxes that line this wretched street? No wonder the Western men are the despair of the world, when Washington wants a decent statue or picture."

"Yet every now and then we have found a good building, or some stray token of waking perception."

"Of course, else it would not be American. But this is a digression. What I want to know is, why foreigners, like yourself, do not content themselves with trying the big cities one after another. There is where you get the real summary of the people."

"For the business side of things, yes."

"And for any real living. The vegetation in these villages does n't count. Conceive of a winter in this hole on a prairie."

"Better here than in a slum."

"I am not sure. At least the slum is nearer living, and the dweller therein can emerge into something positive. But cease any more wandering round Robin Hood's barn, and leave generalities for to-morrow's letter. If you do not want public life, and refuse the vent that literature affords, even in its lowest phase of journalism, you will simply get fat and plethoric with miscellaneous information, of no use to anybody. That is purely British, — to hug yourself and your facts together, and build a high wall about both."

Ballantyne laughed. "British" was the term of utmost opprobrium Ashton could use, but it had ceased to trouble him.

"When the facts are all in," he said, "we will plan, perhaps, what I had better do with them. They have their own use."

"Inscrutable foreigner," Ashton returned, "I do not doubt it, but my mission as reporter remains unfulfilled till I can define what. I warn you that I am on the lookout;" and he turned to his work again with a twinkle as Ballantyne made no response.

"A book, of course," he said to himself; "and it will be a stinger. I have never met his match for going to the bottom of things. That quiet way of

his never seems to hinder his getting whatever he wants."

Ballantyne, as he read on, had stifled a sigh. At moments he had utterly lost courage, as he faced the conditions that confronted him, and found in what manner he must sum them up. But he was resolutely bent on persistent observation; and though he remembered Nantucket with longing, and thought often of the old house in Louisburg Square, he had no intention of hastening even by a day the task set them both.

St. Louis had been a break in the general desolation, and had given them its best. He found there, however, that the German element would be the one to turn to for genuine companionship, their simple living having taken on little of the reckless, flamboyant character that too often distinguished the prosperous American.

"The scholar has, as yet, no place on American soil," he recalled as the verdict of an Englishman who looked with friendliest eyes on the life about him, and he had begun to echo him, but with no outward word of agreement. To judge finally was rank folly till more sheaves were gathered for the thrashing. More and more he had followed Ashton's injunction, "Don't take yourself too seriously. That is where your only grave loss comes in," he had added, as Ballantyne looked questioningly at him. "On your side of the sea, — well, on their side, then, — there is a kind of heavy gathering together,

as of so many stones to be broken for roadway. You have lost the touch and go of a genuine American. Humor enough in you, but Philistinism has been too much for you. Take surfaces more. The deeps crop up of themselves."

"The fact is," Ballantyne replied, "you write me down as a ponderous prig."

"My dear fellow!" Ashton returned, genuinely shocked, "all I mean is, that you seem to be making a matter of life and death out of what really is only a scamper, a mere scamper, after some general information."

A sudden change of expression in Ballantyne's face, a flash gone as soon as perceived; but Ashton had caught it, and turned away, with inward wonder as to what might be involved; nor did it lessen as the days went on. So the West yielded such quota as time allowed, and at last they faced East again, with Boston as the end of the journey; and Ashton, as they left the station, stretched his arms to the gilded dome of the State House, as if he would embrace it and all Boston at once.

"Heaven be praised for its substantiality!" he said. "We have dealt with clapboards and paper sidings, till I had forgotten that the permanent could be. It 's a great country."

"If you would be content with anything so antimodern as Pinckney Street," Mrs. LeBaron said, after their first greetings were over; "the people who took Marion's house have signified that they

will give you the second floor. There have been some reverses, and they want to get just the right kind of lodger. Then, if you find nothing better, you can come here for meals, for it is hardly a stone's throw away, and in that way I shall have something of you, unless, indeed, you are off again at once."

"No, I have come home for refreshment, and the rest must wait a little," Ballantyne answered, looking about with full conviction that here was, thus far, the one spot that best deserved the name of home.

"Can these rooms be had at once?" he asked.

"This hour, if you like."

"Then I will see that instant possession is taken," he said, with inward delight that he was thus to have some part in life that had been Marion's; and within an hour he had fulfilled his word, and till dinner busied himself with a more thorough unpacking than he had known since his arrival. Here should be headquarters for all further stay, and he fancied Marion's amazement if she could look in upon his appropriation of what, he was told, had been her own room and her father's.

"We took it just as it stood," said the severe and rigid matron, who showed the rooms. "They packed up books and light things I did n't want to be responsible for, but they left all the rest just as old Lawyer Gardiner had it from the beginning. It 's all solid mahogany and rosewood, the whole

house, and they say Mr. Lacy never altered a thing. I 'm not one to change myself, but if you feel to move things round, of course you can."

"I want no change," Ballantyne said, "it satisfies me as it is;" and the relieved look on Mrs. Cutter's face showed what apprehension had been in her mind. He sat quietly for a few minutes when she had gone down, looking at one and another article and fancying the little Marion as she moved among them. She would know that he was here, for his letters to Miss Ryde were minute in detail, though in none of them had he allowed discouragement or weariness to come uppermost. To feel either on such ground as this was an insult to all that made it sacred. Here, at least, real life would be found; and he went round to dinner with a look of something very near happiness in his face.

Mischief was in Miss Howard's eyes as she watched his surprised reception of the little pile of notes that had accumulated on Mrs. LeBaron's table, and her own eyes danced as she handed them to him.

"'Strictly private *séance* at Nabula Hall.' 'The distinguished Christian Scientist, Dr. Alonzo Twitchell, requests,' etc. 'Slight contribution to further the mission of the Mothers anti-Military Association.' 'Browning Tea' at Miss Octavia Bostwick's, and dinners galore," she said, seriously. "As an old Bostonian and an old more or less newspaper woman, by proxy at least, I know these writings and what awaits you."

"But how has any one known the time of my appearing? and why do they ask me?"

"Pure divination. The end of one craze draweth near. Boston feels this, but knows also that if one is exhausted another evolves as by magic. Not once since the days of Anne Hutchinson and her afternoon readings and expoundings to colonial dames in search of excitement has life failed to offer an opportunity. The mere mention of your name was enough. Don't look at me in that way. Mrs. Barstow is responsible. She has besieged me for a month to know the date of your return."

"That sets the seal, you know," said Ashton. "Not that you needed it, but what she sanctions cannot be questioned; and even when the first fervor is over, you are let down easily into a permanent niche as it were."

"I hope your predecessor realizes this, and will not take his displacement too hard," said Brownson, with a cynical smile.

"We will wait to see how efficiently or otherwise I fill the required *rôle*," Ballantyne answered, his look of annoyance giving way to amusement. "Tell me his, and I may be better able to live up to the present expectation."

Simon had struck the Burmese gong, and he paused, as they all did, to listen with delight to the sweet, slow, dying fall of the pure note, lingering on the stairs for the last vibrations.

"It would calm the maddest Republican of the

whole mad brood to-day," said Ashton. "I have just come from a report of their doings."

"Consider them soothed into silence," said Margaret Howard, promptly. "I want to tell Mr. Ballantyne about his predecessor. He is a New-Yorker, which is the miraculous thing about it, for Boston usually prefers even Kalamazoo. Perhaps his having been born abroad is regarded as atonement. He is a young sculptor, or sculptor to be, for I believe his talent is only potential as yet. He is handsome as a Greek god, and irresistible as one of Ouida's guardsmen. His voice is divine. That and his beauty have captured every maiden in the town, from our most ancient and honorable, an enthusiast of eighty-five, down to the present narrator and victim of his charms."

"He 's a conceited cad," struck in Brownson, with unusual fire, and a dark look at Margaret.

"I beg your pardon. I have studied him, and he is nothing of the sort," she returned, promptly. "He is accustomed to adoration, and so takes it in rather large doses, but still with perfect calmness. His reading is delicious, idyllic, Elysian. Pan and his pipes are nowhere."

"Hear, hear!" cried Ralph, who had grinned wickedly, as Ashton looked inquiringly at him. "They all go on that way, Brownson. I have been in daily expectation of seeing a procession, with wreaths of parsley and bay and banners and silver trumpets, escorting him to the dome of the State House and crowning him before all Boston."

"And he would submit with that indolent, gracious sweetness, and just a suspicion of scorn below," said Margaret.

"Scorn!" repeated Mrs. LeBaron; "what can you mean, child? Well-disguised but omnivorous greediness I call it. Till he stops reading poetry to an army of crazy women, and goes to work, I have no faith in him. You see what you have to live up to, John."

"Now Heaven forbid!" Ballantyne said, with genuine consternation. "I retire to the desert. The thought of even appearing in public with such comparison hanging over one is benumbing. I devote myself to Louisburg Square. Beyond that I will not be dragged, unless perhaps to a Browning tea. That has a mysterious sound. What does one do?"

"We go in character," said Ralph Howard. "'Red cotton nightcaps,' etc. Learn our lines, and play up to them. 'Sordello,' for example, and trivialities of that nature, that fit in between the cups of tea and macaroons. I recommend that for your consideration. What Boston demands, you see, is the incomprehensible. She understands nothing less. She will have it, and we must admit she gets it. I regard this winter as the culminating triumph of the uttered unutterable, the possed impossible, the scruted inscrutable."

"You are a profane trifler," said Ashton, "and incapable of reverence for anything that is or is to be."

"Wait," said Ralph, with a look toward Ballantyne, which missed its mark, for Mrs. LeBaron had asked a question that opened up a discussion as to differences between East and West, prolonged after they had left the table, and laid aside for resumption when they separated.

Within a fortnight the prophecy had fulfilled itself, and Ballantyne found himself the fashion. A dinner at Mrs. Barstow's was the prelude, and, notwithstanding a certain inward irritation as he thought of her, it proved enjoyable and interesting, the six well-chosen guests all combining to make it so. Tom Barstow, so English that he had even mastered the monocle and its stony glare, and perfected his languid tolerance of life in general, to its extremest expression of bored endurance, devoted himself, if so strong a word might be permitted, as a summary of his action. A little surprised at Ballantyne's pronounced indifference, he held it as another evidence of good form and the possibilities of attainment for any Bostoner sufficiently well born and sufficiently equipped with what even Boston adds as the necessary setting for birth, — a fortune large enough to adorn it at will.

"Bonnets ten deep around him," Margaret Howard reported in private to Mrs. LeBaron, on her return from the Browning tea. "Young Norton and his voice are permanently in the background. Poor Norton!"

"He was a boy, and this is a man," Mrs. LeBaron

answered. "You will not spoil John, whatever you do."

"Don't be too certain," Margaret said; "though they shall not if I can help it. I think, however, that he needs taking down. He has a certain superb way with him as the bonnets kotow, as if homage did not come amiss."

Certainly in this quiet corner, which he saw far less than he wished, there was little fear that he would suffer for lack of criticism. He had fallen into thorough intimacy with the group, and Margaret and especially Ashton let no opportunity slip for jeering at the present enthusiasm and the downfall to come. Brownson joined them, but with more reserve, fearful always that Margaret, who slighted him perversely, would be genuinely entangled in the meshes of this universal net. The discipline was not bad for him. The prize he sought proved even better worth winning than his first leaning toward it had indicated, and he was fast becoming what Ralph had sworn he was too lost in himself ever to be, — an ardent and determined lover, yet more and more distrustful of his worthiness to win.

Ballantyne in the meantime was making his own inward election. He heard a vast amount of brilliant and sparkling talk. The most charming of London drawing-rooms could hardly offer a range more varied or more skilfully handled. A certain rigidity, an unsmiling, almost solemn performance of necessary forms, he found the characteristic of many, and he

missed a quiet simplicity of speech and manner that belongs to the best type of Englishwoman. But the keen humor which delighted him, coming out from the most unexpected ground, was absolutely American, and the one refreshing element in seas of Philistinism.

For Philistinism was rampant, from the Cambridge professor with his solemn mannerisms, down through the whole warp and woof of the society which he adorned. Now and then Ballantyne encountered a simple, direct, natural soul, and caught eagerly at such chance of refreshment; but for the most part they were stray members of the general scheme, and fled from it in dismay as its real nature dawned upon them. An artist or two, serenely holding to ideals; here and there a literary man who went his own way unmoved by any traditions as to what Boston expected of him, — these meant the real life, untouched by caprices and fads and sudden crazes.

Each and all of these came freely to the quiet drawing-room in the old square, a little distrustful at first of this latest Boston epidemic, but accepting him shortly on his own merits, and in turn telling him of one and another whom it would mean something to know. These were real people, and life with such would be possible and full of meaning. If Marion had known them, she might have come to different conclusions; yet what a small percentage they represented, what an infinitesimal leaven for this mass that weighed upon and oppressed him!

"I had to weed and sift when Dunbar died, and the need of earning arose," Mrs. LeBaron had told him, after a little summary of what he was likely to meet in her house. "Before that I drifted, and went about a good deal, though I entertained much more at home. Dunbar's interests were so wide, that I think the best of everything gravitated naturally to him. Now I am grateful for all that remains."

May had half ended. A hint of summer came now and then in the air. Already Ballantyne had had invitations innumerable for seashore and mountain and the sacred recesses of Berkshire hills, and had waived them all with the reply that his plans were altogether uncertain. New York must be seen before the summer exodus began, but he thought reluctantly of the necessity for change. He had lately met a shy Harvard professor, refusing any general society, and absorbed in his psychological studies, a man of child-like simplicity yet deepest wisdom, intercourse with whom was a delight, and who seemed in turn no less attracted. Whatever New York had to offer could not weigh against the certainties opening here; but he was pledged by his letter to certain society claims which must be met, and he had not forgotten his half-unwilling promise to Percival.

"The tail of the comet has not dwindled; its splendor is still as dazzling," Ashton said at dinner the day on which Ballantyne had said to himself that for a time all this must end. "But I warned you

fairly, and already there are dim indications of another to come."

"Impossible!" Mrs. LeBaron said, in mock dismay.

"Only a spark, as it were; an English spark, for they have lost relish for the American order. A young Percival they say, in the ethical line, it appears, and crying like a young John in the desert for a reform of everything. Beautiful as Del Sarto's St. John, they say, and unworldly as an infant of days."

"Is he here or on the way?" asked Ballantyne, in some wonder.

"To come. He was here last month, it seems, with a man who has had his run in Boston also, — a great linguist and up in Greek art. He has been giving some lectures at a small college not far away, and this Percival bowled the town over, I am told, with something of his own, 'Tendencies of English Society,' or something of that nature. A Boston prophet heard him, and has brought back the tidings, and now there is conference as to getting hold of him next fall. The king is dead! Long live the king! You know him?" — as something in Ballantyne's look struck him.

"A little, yes. We crossed together. I congratulate Boston on its discernment," he said, with a smile; and Ashton, obeying the momentary glance from Mrs. LeBaron, turned the talk in another direction.

"Shall you give up your rooms?" she asked, as

Ballantyne lingered for a little before leaving her to a bit of work which had compelled the renouncing of their evening together.

"Not I. This is home," he said, with quick decision. A look of thorough relief was on her face, but there was no time for the explanation he had more than once meant to ask. Evidently the thought connected with Morris troubled her; but as she had not spoken, perhaps she preferred silence, and he still delayed question, uncertain how to interpret it.

Letters from Percival within a day or two waxed impatient.

"You are pledged to us for a season, you know," he said. "I shall be at the Fall River dock for you on Friday morning unless you wire otherwise."

Ballantyne took the letter in to Mrs. LeBaron. "The summons has come," he said. "After all I am somewhat curious. I should like to understand the man."

A singular look crossed Mrs. LeBaron's face.

"There are several things to learn," she said. "When you are back again, we will compare notes."

Chapter Fifth

BALLANTYNE, who had returned early in the evening, intending to write letters for the English mail, found Professor Sutton sitting by the table lost in study over a card which he held in his hand.

"The comet has come again, out of space," he said. "Your pardon, Ballantyne. I came up to leave a book, and this card lying here caught my eye. Where have you met Pendleton Morris?"

"On shipboard coming over. Do you know him, Sutton?"

"I don't know," the professor replied, hesitatingly. "I know such sides as I am able to comprehend, but there were too many for me. He has profound ability; yes, more than ability; profound power, but,—" He hesitated, then added, "Drop him. I do not like to talk of people."

"Nor I," said Ballantyne, "save as they form material for deduction. Mere gossip is detestable, but this means something you can help me in. I am going to his colony for a time. I want your view of him."

The young professor's serene, thoughtful eyes rested on him with sudden trouble.

"Did you — were you much attracted to him?"

"On the contrary. There was no good reason, but I had almost antipathy from the beginning. It was unreasonable, for I found him a fascinating companion, of absolutely marvellous knowledge, but in spite of this distrusted him. You know him. Was I wrong? What does he mean to you as a *man?*"

Ballantyne had laid deliberate stress on the noun. His own thought wavered from hour to hour, at moments certain that his suspicion was fact, at others scoffing at his own, apparently fixed delusion, since dismiss it he could not. Now he fixed his eyes on his visitor's face, and as he saw its utter unsuspiciousness doubted again.

"A *man*," he repeated, with the former emphasis.

Sutton shook his head.

"A mixture of mediæval monk and ancient Greek, with the worst and best characteristics of each, and topped with the utmost possibilities of Scotch dogmatism and Scotch self-esteem."

"So I am told," Ballantyne answered. "I begin to understand better, but there are other points. The old Greeks had some odd theories. Is he the exponent of them all?"

"You will see for yourself," Sutton said, hastily. "If you can adjust yourself to the combination, you have the learning of the ages on tap, as it were, and it is the flow of pure water from a real source."

"But," began Ballantyne.

"Use your own eyes, my friend," the professor said, decisively. "Your prejudice is your present safeguard, and if it melts, why, so much the better. I have profound admiration for Morris's power. For the rest, each must judge for himself. If his mission is true, no man can overthrow it. I wish him well. By the way," he added, "this card has a message. I should have handed it to you at once."

Ballantyne took it and read pencilled below the name, "I shall call again about ten. J. P. M." He frowned slightly, tossed it into the waste basket, and took up the book his friend had brought, a Report of the Psychical Society, with details of some recent and singular experiments with a trusted medium, and soon both were deep in eager discussion of the points involved. The bell rang unnoted, and both looked up in surprise as the servant announced Morris and Percival, the former entering with the breezy self-confidence that was his usual manner. Percival's eyes beamed with pleasure as he came forward, half shyly.

"I followed my letter, you see," he said. "We came yesterday for an engagement, and take the midnight train on, for we are both due at some affair to-morrow, where Morris is to read Italian poetry. We cannot ask you to do that, I fear."

"You are not to read Italian poetry, I am sure," Ballantyne said, with a sudden impulse. "Stay over, and I will go with you on Monday."

"Agreed," Percival said, heartily; "unless Morris counts me recreant. I am under orders."

"Not I," the latter replied, whirling round from his profuse handshaking with the professor, whose eyes were on him interestedly. "This is Thursday. You can get quite the flavor of Boston in four days, but don't let it spoil the New York cup. Ha! At the old mystery, I see," he went on, his quick eye noting the open Report on the table. "Does Harvard intend to permit dabbling in the occult?"

"Call it by the right name, and she permits anything," Professor Sutton said, significantly. "This is one phase. I am at another. We are in the midst just now, the two or three of us who have been following up this thing, of a very queer case, a match for Lys, with his sub sub-consciousness," and he went on with a detailed account of the circumstances.

"It is actual demonstration," he added. "There can be no doubt of this third consciousness, and there may be another."

"In layers like an onion," Morris said, laughing. "Peel and peel on the way to the heart, and suddenly there is a hole, and the layers are over, and the heart is not, but the excitement keeps up to the last instant and the final revelation of — nothing."

"That is your personal interpretation," the professor said, quietly. "Undoubtedly it fits one type. Man is a complex creature, and the new science shows him even more so than the wisest have believed."

"If self-hypnotization were practicable," Morris

said, still laughing, but uneasily, "I should proceed at once to it. In the end I might come to understand my own composition. On the whole, I think I believe in the hole-in-the-middle theory."

"You have some reason," Professor Sutton answered, with a smile, but his eyes rested attentively on Morris's face, as he talked on more and more eagerly, till aroused to the consciousness that he had barely time for his train.

"Don't come alone, Tom," he said, throwing his arm about Percival for a moment, with the impulsive affectionateness Ballantyne had noted on shipboard, and with a tumultuous shaking of hands he vanished into the night.

Ballantyne in the morning sent a note to Mrs. Barstow, where he was engaged to dine, asking if he might bring Percival, and received delighted consent, and cards for this rising sun, who, quite unconscious of any glory to come, had settled into Mrs. LeBaron's cosiest corner, his eyes resting on her with purest pleasure as they fell at once into eager talk. Work waited meantime, and she dismissed them reluctantly, a little aggrieved that the evening was promised, and claiming Saturday at least as her own. Ballantyne seconded her strenuously.

"A taste, a mere sip, is all you are to have of Boston now," he said; "but it is as fatal as your *soldi* for the Fountain of Trevi. You will return in spite of yourself, and Boston is as certain as Rome."

He smiled as he spoke, for Ashton, as he passed

through, had lingered long enough to say, ostensibly to Mrs. LeBaron, but with a wicked look at her companions:

"The king abdicates and presents his own successor to-night, I hear. That's an artful dodge, and lets him retire with colors still flying. The king never dies."

The dinner ended in a crowded evening and an assured sensation, and Mrs. Barstow was serenely radiant. It was a joy she owed to Ballantyne, whose star as yet showed no signs of paling, and she was more than grateful. Percival was a trifle shy, but most charmingly simple and unconscious; and his beautiful head, though lower by several inches than Ballantyne's towering one, lost little in comparison. The evening was practically an ovation to both, the unexpected appearance of this new light, whose advent had only been whispered, exciting curiosity to the highest. Percival at last, a trifle impatient, had suggested their going, and moved toward the door where Mrs. Barstow was standing. There was a sudden stir; a pause of expectation which seemed to fall on all about, and in the instant before talk went on again they were aware of a figure tall as Ballantyne's own, and a head, as Ashton had affirmed, like a young Greek god, the owner of which, looking about serenely as if certain of his kingdom, advanced slowly with a word here and there. Then his eyes fell upon Percival, and he put out his hand with a look of pleasure.

"How is this?" he said. "I did not expect to see you in Boston."

"Mr. Ballantyne is responsible," Percival said, presenting them, and for a few moments the three men made a group on which all eyes rested. Ballantyne's ears were phenomenally acute, and as they chatted, words came to him in a tone lowered but perfectly distinct.

"This is a great go; the three Graces on exhibition together."

"You are mistaken. It is Past, Present, and Future," a high-pitched voice responded. Ballantyne laughed outright as the speaker, who had met his smiling eyes, colored furiously, and then, obeying Percival's hand on his arm, made his way toward Mrs. Barstow, from whom they escaped with difficulty. Norton had preceded them, and she met him with effusion, from which he turned to follow the pair he had just left.

"I shall see you next week," he said to Percival. "Mind that you do not find any excuse for taking yourself away. It is you I am coming to, you know."

"Then you have consented? That is very good," Percival said, in a surprised tone.

"Yes, for a day or two," Norton replied, and turned back.

"It is another case of love at first sight," Percival said, with a little trouble in his voice. "He came to hear some of the lectures, and Morris, who has an even stronger passion for beauty than I supposed,

became enamored on the spot. He is certainly gloriously handsome; beautiful, for that is a better word than any mere handsome you know, and Morris so besieged him that after a time he consented, and is to stay some weeks, I think, unless plans change."

Ballantyne laughed again.

"It is a most extraordinary combination," he said; and then, without explaining, went on, "Now, tell me how the evening sums up."

"Too much honey," said Percival. "It is unnatural diet, and leaves a bad taste in the mouth. Morris says it exhilarates him like champagne, though he knows well it is only mead and bubble. Me it depresses, and wine, oddly enough, has the same effect. This is all very strange to me. I was told Boston was critical to a degree. It does n't look like it."

"This is the beginning," Ballantyne said. "For final judgment you will have to wait. This time I reserve you chiefly for the LeBaron household. There is no disappointment there."

"No, there could not be. What a grand woman she is," Percival said, eagerly. "I have seen no one like her. New York has a different type. They are charming, I find, a great many of them, and swift of speech, but different. Your Miss Howard might grow to be a little like her."

"There is a look of such possibility," Ballantyne answered, "and her quality is fine. You have quick eyes, Percival."

"Too quick, perhaps," he said. "Morris will have it that I should have none, so far as women are concerned, till I am thirty or more, but I am disposed to use them as I go."

"The better way for most of us," Ballantyne answered, curious but determined to make no other comment, and the talk drifted on lightly till they parted for the night.

For himself, he sat late finishing a long letter to Miss Ryde, in which he gave her the history of the last fortnight in Boston. He paused for a while, and took from his pocket the last that he had received from her, reading over and over a paragraph or two at the close.

"Hetherington, to whom, you know, Eleanor had long ago been assigned, but whose indifferent temperament never got beyond friendship, is developing a most unexpected fervor. Whether it is natural growth that is responsible I do not yet decide, for no one knows what mysterious strata in a boy's make-up may suddenly come uppermost. I notice, though, that in such cases the strata are always of the earliest period known, and thus naturally to be labelled 'Amor.' So it is now, and Beresford may be said to have begun it, since his frantic adoration of Marion is a source of perennial jibing and jeering from the set who have listened to his anti-matrimonial tirades. He would marry her if he could, I honestly believe, for he has offered himself in private, in public, in diverse and sundry places and manners; has appealed to me,

and is in the depths of infatuation. For all this, Marion goes her way untouched and untouchable.

"As for Hetherington, he is no less mad, but it is a silent lunacy. He is desperately in earnest, and I know she is sorry for him; but no discipline could be better for the young cub, who has never till now shown real affection for any one but yourself. As to Marion, whatever the end may be, she has thought for no one but you, and thus far I think she is certain that you will return to stay. How is it, John? Eight months are gone. You must have some inkling of the final summary. This is not a question, however. It is merely natural longing to answer myself as I would, yet do not believe I ever shall. Naturally I draw my own conclusions from the array of facts your letters present, but they daunt one no more than facts everywhere. I read without comment to Marion, and she listens in the same way, and each understands the silence of the other. Were no thought of you uppermost, she would be absolutely contented with life as it offers itself. It is plain that to wait is the verb we must all conjugate at present, and I confess to more and more impatience as the days go on. Be good as you have been and write me often."

"Good, dear soul," Ballantyne thought, as he folded the letter, wrote the last words of his own, and then paced up and down silently, thinking thoughts that for any possible fulfilment must bide their time.

"It seems ungracious to regret Boston when New York has so much that one can care for," Percival

said, as they sat on the deck of the Fall River boat on Monday night. "But I am finding it hard to leave. The Philistine is there, but the city has a different atmosphere."

"How can it help it?" Ballantyne said. "If you believe in the transmission of general as well as particular characteristics, you would think with me that the type of men who founded it, and the lives of their noblest successors, are ingrained in the substance of the very ground itself on which one walks. New York from the beginning was a trading-post, Boston a spiritual centre, and each is true to the original spirit, though I am bound to admit the Puritan was at least thrifty."

"No disrespect to the Dutch," said Percival, with a laugh. "You will never find a better Puritan than John of Barneveld and his order. Without them the Pilgrims would have fared badly."

"Granted, but the scholarly element stayed at home, while before the tree-stumps were brown in her fields the Plymouth colony had founded Harvard. But I am going with an open mind to this New World Maelstrom, though I confess to distinct desire to make Boston headquarters for my American life."

"Then you do not propose to renounce England altogether?"

"Altogether as fixed home, but never as dear and familiar ground, to which I must often return. No American, I am sure, can dispense with the influences

at work there, and each can help the other to larger thought and more efficient work."

"There is materialism to be fought in both," Percival said. "I do not know how it seems to you, but on this side I find such an amazing quality of recklessness about it all; a kind of mad scramble in pleasure as well as in the mere money getting. One is swamped at once, and loses sight of real aims almost unconsciously. I am glad that I go into it occasionally only, and that the real life is away from it all. You will see."

He smiled, but said no more. A tacit agreement seemed to have been made that all discussion of methods or ideas should be waived till Ballantyne had seen and judged for himself, and the talk passed to other topics.

"If money is king, dirt is prime minister," Ballantyne said next morning, as they made their disgusted way through mud and garbage and all the accompaniments of streets fouler than any civilized city has to show, Waring and purification being still of the future. "It is simply inconceivable that such a state of things is allowed."

"Nothing is inconceivable in such directions, I find," said Percival. "You submit here easily to impositions that no British mind would tolerate a moment. This is no worse than usual; perhaps even better."

Ballantyne fell into astonished silence, examining docks, pavements, ash-barrels, packing-boxes, and the

other claimants for sidewalk space, following Percival as he hurried through one or two errands, and then again made his way toward the Jersey ferry.

"Eminently nasty, and now we are free of it till next time," the latter said, with a long breath. "The river is the sole compensation till you get to our hill; only nine hundred feet, to be sure, but high enough and steep enough to let us roll stones down on our enemies if they come too near. To get there is a slow piece of work, for you must first take a cable road, and quite a walk lies beyond. All this you see is in the nature of moat and drawbridge, and cuts us off from miscellaneous society. As it is, we get more than is desirable."

"It should be very good to compensate for such approach," Ballantyne said, eying the dingy houses, the saloons on every corner, the slouching men, the unkempt women, and dirty children at every turn, and the car floor filled with market-baskets, the property of fat German women on their way from Washington Market.

"Bad, is n't it?" Percival said, with a grimace. "But something odd is always happening, and one gets queer side-lights on things in just such talk as this."

"But it is not American. It is German and Chinese."

"That is American, as you find it on a Jersey ferry-boat or a suburban car."

Ballantyne laughed, and said no more till they had

left the car and walked for some distance. A sharp turn and houses were behind them, and they had before them gently rising ground, the heights beyond, and the tender green of freshest spring in leaf and bud. The change was magical, and Ballantyne, always depressed by squalor, felt his spirits rising.

"Purgatory is behind," said Percival. "When you see it again, you will look down on it in the mass, but escape all the unsavory detail. The rest of the way is peace."

Chapter Sixth

THE New Yorker, driven by high rents into Jersey suburbs, passes through the terrors of West Street, and the no less aggressive squalor and sordidness of the opposite shore, to such village as he has chosen for what remains of his twenty-four hours, with small thought of what lies beyond the beaten track on each side of the rival railroads that parcel out the old State. Back of the Palisades are quaint villages, not always beyond adventurous picnickers, but some, at least, seldom reached; and beyond them and the stretch of heights lie the great marshes, with the smell of the sea, and the sweep of free wind, and a coloring changing with the changing seasons.

Once known, the artist whose eyes have rested on them needs Holland no longer, but finds to his hand tints of sky and cloud, and shifting lights and shadows on waving reeds and grass, that no man's palette, labor as he may, can ever render in full. Here and there one in the vanished generations of early settlers had found what hint of home lay across the river, and built for himself and his heirs the hip-roofed, wide-spreading Dutch houses, set deep in orchards and nut-

trees, with wealth of meadow for pasture, and rich corn land rolling away on either side.

Such a nook, perverted later from its original intention, Morris had found, and the perversion made it but the better for his purpose. A stray speculator, of tendencies too æsthetic for his own good, had, in one of his tours of discovery, come upon the house, and settled within himself that here might prosper a quiet and exclusive summer hotel, chiefly on the cottage plan. The old offices at the back of the dwelling, built for the slaves and used later for general farm laborers, were in fair preservation, and could easily be restored for all kitchen and baser uses. The heirs had preferred Newport and Saratoga for their summer fields, and had no taste for the seclusion involved in such life as could be had nearer home, and thus bargaining was easy.

The delighted purchaser ran up a number of summer cottages as adjuncts to his prospective hotel, and proceeded to advertise its claims, nor did he lose courage till three successive seasons of failure to secure more than a dozen people convinced him that his scheme must lapse. For the ordinary business man it was too inaccessible; for the rich, the approaches were too uncomfortable and depressing. And at last the houses stood empty, or knew only an occasional and discontented tenant, till the day when Morris, deeply disgusted with what he called "the rampant civilization of the Oranges," chanced upon it, and knew it for his own.

All this was told at length with the enthusiastic flow of words inseparable from any thought of Morris, and Ballantyne confessed that nothing could well be better. In the old mansion itself, its discoverer jubilantly declared, not a modern convenience remained, since his first care had been to do away with every pipe and plug, and allow nothing more modern than the hydraulic ram that gave them their supply of water.

"He would have preferred Etruscan jars or a yoke with pails," Percival said; "but luckily the feminine element knew better."

"You mean they had none of them fit sinew for a business that their betters never scorned," returned Morris. "Think on those Capri women; tall and lithe, and the great jars poised on their heads, losing never a drop as they climb the stairs. Chop up your sewing-machines and set your girls water-bearing, and you will get a different type from the slab-sided scrawnies America turns out."

"Talk it over with Miss Byers," Percival said. "That 's her department, not yours;" and with another volley of words Morris retreated to his study and shut the door.

A week had passed since their arrival, and with every hour Ballantyne's interest had grown. In the main house was the housekeeper, Miss Byers, a quiet Quaker of modified tendencies, in whose gentle black eyes were now and then glints of a humor that bore evidence to comprehension, in some degree at least,

of the new and often astounding elements about her. With her had come a stout and comfortable colored cook, with the genius of her race for savory preparation of food, and with full willingness to allow the experiments in the Italian dishes demanded by Morris. Both were supplemented by the unbounded and vociferous good will of German Marie, whose English was of her own arrangement, and who preferred German wherever it could be used. Even such service was a concession on the part of Morris, who looked forward to a time when, save for the cook, whose necessity he admitted, all work should be done by the members of the household.

Ballantyne observed, as days went on, that whatever theory might be, in his own case no finger was lifted to give them outlet in practice. In his own way, however, Morris was an indefatigable worker. His library in all tongues, and of several thousand volumes, chosen for contents and not for covers, as he took pains to announce, overflowed the great room he used as study, and lined one side also of his bedroom walls, the low-studded room above.

Percival's opened from his through a passage with doors at each end, which could at will shut them off completely. On the opposite side of the broad hall, with its half doors at each end, was the general sitting-room, at present rather bare and unattractive. Regnault and young Pierson, a lad of eighteen in Morris's charge, had the rooms above, and the re-

mainder were given over to Miss Byers and an invalid sister who was never seen.

This for the main house. The cottages, Ballantyne soon found, had a life no less marked, but for the most part distinct from their own. In the central one the steady beat of a steam-engine had seemed to imply manufacturing of some order, till Percival explained that one of the colony, a Dr. Prescott, had come to them from California, bringing his theories with him, and not only theories, but patients enough to fill four of the cottages. In the central one, reserved for himself, he had set up his machines, his avowed object being to exercise the internal body by reversion and the external by percussion. Stand a patient on his or her head, as nearly and for as long as the case admitted, and naturally the internal organs found new arrangements, and must of necessity develop certain new tendencies and capacities.

This was the first process, and having accomplished this, the percussors, driven by steam at a rate of from one to three hundred strokes a minute, naturally brought about reaction and balanced matters. Silence so many hours a day, diet elaborately simple and adapted to each individual case, and, last, the incorporation of the Jaeger system at its fullest, made a bill so attractive, that a series of invalids, weary of water cure and even Christian Science and its variations, had flocked to him and remained.

There could be no doubt that the amazing picturesqueness of the new prophet himself had much to

do with the brilliancy of his successes. A Western wildness, as of the Plains moderately modified, hung about him, accented by his flowing hair and beard of richest russet, and eyes but a shade darker, the soft browns and creams of his Jaeger garments creating the "nocturne in brown," which Percival had named him. His voice was a low, soft drawl, half Southern, half Western, in its inflections, and another element of his charm.

Power was unquestionably there, of its own sort, and absolute fascination for his patients, who were, to Ballantyne's surprise, chiefly men, with a sprinkling of elderly maidens. A brother, a lesser duplicate of himself and a medical student, acted as assistant, and besides housekeeper, he had a corps of nurses and attendants for special cases. He and his immediate family had meals in the main house, the order of treatment obliging most of his patients to eat alone.

It was at once evident to Ballantyne that Prescott was, quite unconsciously to Percival, profoundly jealous both of him and of Regnault, while the latter, in turn, looked with dark suspicion on every other candidate for Morris's favor. Life was, however, so arranged that little opportunity remained for indulgence in these sentiments. A class in New York to which he went three times a week, on alternate days, with Morris and Percival, had been arranged for him at once by Morris, whose influence seemed able to bring about what he would, and between times he

had as occupation a translation into French of a volume of essays by an obscure but powerful thinker, whose thought had struck Morris and suggested the task.

What he willed, Regnault did. His fiery blue eyes softened as they rested on his master. "*Mon Maître; cher Maître*," he called him always, and flew to his arms as they met in the morning, with a fervor that never failed. They chatted together in his own tongue, and so far as he was able Regnault absorbed him with a passion which carried always in itself the seeds of its destruction.

Nothing but Percival's gentle good will and unselfishness prevented daily explosions. They had nearly come at moments, for Regnault looked with fury on any familiarity on the part of Dr. Prescott, but thus far had been easily shamed and silenced.

From the beginning there had been no jealousy of Ballantyne. Whether he divined that infatuation from this source was not to be dreaded, he did not say, but he turned to him with an impulse of confidence, and had at once given his opinion of Dr. Prescott, with the *r* rolled to a degree of ferocity next door to malediction. The look that came at times as he watched the lithe and sinuous healer was so nearly murderous, that Miss Byers eyed her carving-knife timorously, and furtively slid it under the edge of the platter, Marie, who shared his antipathy, in the meantime nodding approvingly.

The cottages focussed all interest on the party in

the main house. Regnault gave lessons to the few who were allowed any intellectual effort, and to the maidens who were not, but who could still listen, declaimed De Musset as he had done on shipboard. A gay Western widow, but slightly older, it seemed, than her daughters, flirted indiscriminately wherever an opening occurred; and another of the pensive type, a brown-eyed and gracious little German, studied Greek under Morris's direction, and announced daily at dinner how far she had progressed in "Blaydo," whose "Republic" she had daringly chosen as her battle ground with the language.

At each meal Morris read an extract from some favorite author, to lift the act, as he said, above mere feeding, and often suggested a reading-stand in the background, and the old monastic fashion of reading through the entire meal. As Ballantyne studied him, he concluded that a certain instinct of self-preservation underlay the proposition, the animal in this curious nature coming uppermost in feeding, so that no gloss of acquired breeding, or his real mental quality, sufficed to hide the rage that came upon him. The veins in his forehead swelled. The favorite dish, eyed greedily even when his plate had been piled high with it, was sent almost *en masse* down his throat, and for the first ten minutes of devouring, silence ruled. Then he calmed, looked about, and was ready for talk till dessert and coffee ended possibility of further speech, and he went heavily to the long sleep which he took daily, and which undoubtedly

kept his late hours of severe study from wearing upon him. With waking came the long walk, in which Regnault, in spite of the Frenchman's natural abhorrence of physical exercise, shared when he could, and in which all were urged to join.

Supper waited their late return, and discussions always arising, and always of a deeply combative nature, transferred themselves to the study, and went on with an energy and vigor inexhaustible as the man himself. Guests of all orders came and went, all thinkers, all in sympathy with some phase of this abounding thought; and the life, nominally isolated, was filled to the brim with interests.

Free entrance to one or two popular clubs and an unending list of dinner invitations gave the added flavor of the world from which he had retreated, but to which he went with no less relish than he returned, and now Ballantyne and Percival accompanied him, both eagerly sought, and knowing that June would see the exodus of most of their hosts.

Into this life, made up of as complex elements as could well have been brought together, came at the appointed time young Norton, whose deep eyes and lazy grace and sweetness made him adored by the entire colony. Ballantyne they worshipped at a distance. He was too indifferent, they had decided, too English to really belong to them; but here was a product more comprehensible, whose praises could never be too loudly sung. Fascinated by the freedom of the life, he fraternized with all in turn, took

up his own tasks, studied with Morris, and read French poetry and drama with Regnault, whose soul was torn by alternate jealousy and adoration; and so summer came in, and the weeks flew by, return to Boston for any stay seeming less and less probable.

Ballantyne had spent part of June in the city, studying New York byways and slums. He had visited also the Socialist clubs and various organizations under their control, finding the members, with here and there an exception, of an order much below the English Socialists; and, indifferent to further knowledge of them, gave himself to small excursions into the surrounding towns, returning gladly to the Heights.

So far as interior feeling went, his judgment of Morris had not altered, but he reproached himself for faithlessness as he saw the man's readiness to share his gifts, and his generous bestowal of time and trouble where any phase of teaching was involved. He seemed willing to give himself impartially to all, often at the cost of his own time and pleasure, and in the species of service which he had adopted for Sunday mornings struck often a note so fine that prejudice vanished, and only the high thought at its best and noblest showed its face. Regnault's violin added its charms, for he played with feeling and spirit, and now Norton's beautiful voice became a part of the hour, and drew tears of sensibility from little Frau Bergmann, whose knowledge of "Blaydo" was in inverse ratio to her application.

One fact was very noticeable, and now and then

Ballantyne pondered its significance. Morris, whether intentionally or otherwise he could not tell, avoided being alone with him, and their talks were always general ones. If any end were to be accomplished, it was plain that he relied on Percival's influence to bring it about, and till Norton's coming, he bestowed attention impartially on all.

"There is one objection which I am just beginning to see," said Percival one evening, as he paced up and down the old road in front with Ballantyne. A close friendship had developed between the two, and more and more Percival turned to him for talk on the problems of life and thought that absorbed him.

"Well," Ballantyne said, looking off to the twinkling lights far below, and baring his forehead to the light breeze that blew from the west, "we can meet it, I suppose?"

"I doubt it. Does it ever occur to you that the commonplace has its own distinct uses, and is as necessary as grass in nature, for instance? Here we are, a colony of sharply defined individualities, brought into closest contact, whereas naturally each would, by itself, have its own family background as cushion for its angles, and its peculiarities would be diffused and dispersed like superfluous electricity."

"Then you begin to doubt the plan," Ballantyne said.

"Not I, save at one point. What could possibly hold more stimulus or better chance for real progress in our special fields? I was only thinking of the

tribe marshalled by Dr. Prescott, and a little weary of the endless fencing that goes on. But Morris never minds. Why should I?"

"Morris's appetite for sweet stuff is larger than yours," Ballantyne answered. "A row of adoring women stimulates him to the utmost. He sat among seven this morning expounding Æschylus, and the little Bergmann wept for joy."

Percival laughed.

"Morris understands them," he said. "He can't be touched. His susceptibility lies in another direction." He hesitated, then went on. "Regnault gets more unmanageable every day. You may have noticed it."

"When does Norton leave?" Ballantyne asked, after a little silence.

"He does n't leave. That is the difficulty. I have had a passionate scene with Regnault this afternoon, and pitied him thoroughly. He says that Morris is swallowed up by Norton, and I have to admit myself that there is a sort of infatuation about it. I have never seen Morris so deeply moved."

"Then he has these sudden passions?"

"Perhaps so; yes," Percival said, reluctantly. "That is, I have been told so."

"Then you have never observed until now?"

"No; for I only knew him really in Italy. My cousin had recommended him as coach. He had met him in Capri, where he had an old house and all his

books, and I caught at the idea, for I wanted Italian. I had two months with him in Capri, and he was my friend from the first moment. Then we had a winter in Rome, — an amazing winter, for he knew everybody and went everywhere; and then I went home, and he followed and was in London for a few weeks, busy with the society of which I have told you. Then he came over here for a year and more, and at last returned for me. I could not refuse him, and here I am."

"And that is all you know of him?"

"All I need to know, is it not? I like his way of taking men for what they represent, and asking no questions. A man is always actually what you find him, for he must always be the product of what has gone before. If that be good and efficient, I see no slightest need of question. Then, too, so far as Morris is concerned, he spills out his whole life with entire recklessness. You must have noted that."

"To you, perhaps. I have never heard him."

"Then it is because your guard is still up. He says that, warmly as he likes you, you never let him come near. You will never know his best, Ballantyne, till you do."

"Per-cee-val, Per-cee-val!" Regnault's voice sounded from the piaza, a note of entreaty in it, and he broke away with a hurried —

"Let me see you again to-night, Ballantyne. There is more I want to say. I have something to tell you."

Chapter Seventh

STILL pacing up and down under the long line of chestnut-trees, Ballantyne looked about at the lighted cottages, the soft gleam from Chinese lanterns hung on piazzas or here and there among the trees, and the friendly sense of companionship in the old house, dark in the shadow, with its one point of brilliant light shining from Morris's study.

The crashing chords of the Pilgrim Chorus from Tannhäuser came from Frau Bergmann's piano, a recent importation, and, to guard all students, only allowed in the evening. It passed into the bridal song in Lohengrin, and as he listened, again his heart was full of longing.

Incredible as he would have thought it three months before, more than once of late he had said to himself that here was a spot for which Marion might come to care, and as he wrote of it to Miss Ryde he had, half unconsciously to himself, given only its most attractive aspects. That he still questioned Morris as a man made little difference. There seemed no doubt that his motives were pure, and in any case this life of student and thinker was in itself a filter in which

any temperamental baseness must naturally go to the bottom.

For himself Boston was his choice, but after all did it not sum up chiefly in the old house in the Square? It was people rather than places that made real living, and again, as he thought this, he fell into fresh study of the strange elements about him. It was Percival in whom was embodied the best of life here, but Percival's faith in it compelled the taking for granted of the whole. Miss Byers represented something no less to be trusted, her simple integrity and sound judgment being the unseen mainspring of the practical workings of the scheme. Why, then, should it not extend, draw in more and more of like mind, and be in the end what its head claimed it must be?

This had been his attitude till within a few days, when Morris's increasing oblivion to everything save Norton had opened up a new phase of this permanent puzzle, and distracted the coterie of worshippers beyond bearing. Frau Bergmann dropped sentiment and wept tears of rage and spite as she carried her plaint from one to another, and Ballantyne, who in his interest had nearly ceased to criticise, found all his old objections once more aroused and vigorous. He smiled as he reflected on certain absurdities of his position.

"To settle down permanently with a Welshman, an Englishman, and a Frenchman is American life from one point of view, but not precisely what I

came for," he thought, and he recalled now the comment of a New York guest made but yesterday. He had come for a day merely to look on, and had no special interest in the plan or in Morris, a shrewd observer, and a man who had watched the rise and fall of many communities.

"You seem to have only young men about you," he had said. "Young men and a good many women. Where are the elders?"

Morris had colored furiously as he replied:

"There is no faith in middle-aged blood. Youth alone can meet the coming need."

The visitor smiled, and as he afterward walked with Ballantyne to the cars, said, with a final look behind him:

"An extraordinary man, but the real reason he has chiefly boys about him is because only ardent boys swallow such dogmatism without question. I have had my eye on Morris for several years in one place and another, and he will not bear an instant's contradiction. Then, too, his thought is endlessly shifting. Each year has a new passion, though this, I confess, means more and looks more lasting. Do you take stock in it?"

"In many ways, yes," Ballantyne answered, feeling that in his position as nominal guest of Morris he had no right to criticise; and his questioner, with a laugh, said, as he shook hands:

"Keep such faith as you can, but I shall not find you here next year, I am certain."

Of all this Ballantyne thought as he walked. A certain inertia had come upon him, born in part, it might be, of climate, since July heats had come, and a long drouth in which every green thing scorched and shrivelled. Dust lay thick on the chestnuts, and the gnarled branches of the apple orchard showed gray as olive-trees under the intense, unclouded blue.

More than once he had decided to break away and seek some cooler spot, and in pity for Regnault had sugggested their going together to Bar Harbor for a week or two. But the latter clung to Morris with a tenacity which the latter had evidently begun to resent, though he still sought to soothe him and prevent the outbreaks which only Percival had power to quiet.

A special case had lately absorbed Dr. Prescott, and thus prevented other complications, but a latent sneer in his look came oftener to the surface as he watched the undisguised conflict of stormy feeling in Regnault's face.

The cottages were filled to overflowing, the later additions chiefly members of Morris's winter classes in town, or drawn there by reports of what might be found, — an extraordinary mixture of society people, profoundly puzzled by the elements about them, yet certain that one or two, at least, were as utterly good form as even the Four Hundred could demand.

Types enough to illustrate any theory chosen were at hand, and each one seemed bent upon impressing itself on Ballantyne, whose calm indifference acted

only as provocative to furthur effort. Absolute infatuation for Morris summed up the situation for certainly a dozen of the women who sat at his feet, but to this, beyond the daily expounding, he paid small heed, though any diminution would clearly have made itself felt. All his thought for the time being concentrated on Norton, from whom he had extracted a promise to remain, and who yielded reluctantly as if to a power beyond his own control. He had never shared the passion of feeling that moved the older man. It was in this that his power lay, and might even continue to bind long after earlier favorites had been laid on the shelf.

"It is all unwholesome and abnormal," Ballantyne thought, as he recalled Morris's look of devotion when Norton came near. "Presently there will be spontaneous combustion, and the whole thing vanish in smoke."

Percival's quick step drew near as he turned, and he saw, as the light from a street lamp fell upon his face, that he was pale and excited.

"Ballantyne," he said, "I am at the very end of my resources. Regnault has threatened suicide, and while I doubt his actually attempting it, he is in a frightful state. If he were a woman, one might comprehend. He behaves as I suppose wild women do when they are deserted. What can be done?"

"Call in Morris himself. It is his business to make explanations or whatever else is needed."

"If he could; but there are none, Ballantyne, save

in the fact that he has exhausted anything that Regnault had for him, and has not even toleration left. That phase of him is all new to me, though I was warned. They said he sucked his oranges and threw away the skins; but I did not believe it, nor can I fully now, for I find him loyal yet. But Regnault's wits will go. Morris sat by Norton's side, reading with him, and Regnault had placed himself on the piazza where he could watch every movement. He was grinding his teeth with rage and despair when I got to him, and I have put him to bed like a child, and given him bromide to make him sleep. The thing is as bad for Morris as for him."

"Come away from it all," Ballantyne said, in sudden disgust. "Let us go to Plymouth and Mrs. LeBaron. She is natural and genuine and wholesome, and all that this thing is not."

"Don't be so fierce," said Percival, with a groan. "This is only a midsummer madness. It does not touch the real heart of the thing at all."

"No, because there is no heart," Ballantyne said, decisively. "There is a brain with a power that can simulate anything for the time being, but for soul, there is simply a mass of passion and emotions, abnormal in action and absolutely destructive of natural wholesome life. Come with me, and we will take this unhappy Regnault, if we can."

"Why not appeal to Norton?" Percival said. "He has no real wish to stay, for his friends who back him are impatient at his delay in going abroad.

His fancy is caught and his pride stirred at the wild estimate Morris puts upon him, but I have seen him shrink from his fondling, and he is afraid of the sort of passion that moves him. Morris has been in a rage with him to-day; the sort of rage he has told me sometimes comes over him, but I had never believed him. He frightened Norton horribly. I doubt if he will stay."

As he ended they had neared the house, and the sound of Morris's voice came to them suddenly, hoarse with passion.

"I cannot, and I will not, take things as you do," Norton said, and then came the sound of sudden sobs and Norton's exclamation of shocked amazement. "For God's sake be a man, and not the mad mixture you are to-day, Morris!"

The light was at that moment extinguished; Norton ran up the stairs to his room, and they heard the key turn in the study door.

"The end has begun," Ballantyne said.

"Whatever it is, I must see it out," Percival answered. "This thing shall not go to pieces because temporary aberration sets in. Thunder clears the air, and bright shining may come again."

He said good night hurriedly as if afraid to trust further words, and soon Ballantyne followed him.

The atmosphere of the breakfast table next morning was so lurid, that Ballantyne, who had slept only troubled sleep, was confirmed in his determination to seek purer air. Regnault's bloodshot eyes were red

with passionate weeping, and Morris showed tokens of a conflict still undecided. Miss Byers looked considerately away, and Marie, who regarded Dr. Prescott as the source of all evil, eyed him belligerently. Percival was pale and exhausted, and Morris avoided his eyes.

"An incomprehensible mess," Ballantyne thought, eager to escape; but as he turned to Morris, meaning to announce his intention of leaving for a week or two at Plymouth, Regnault's hand was on his arm, and he said, low, "I pray you come to me."

He rose as he spoke and left the room, and Ballantyne presently followed.

"See here, my dear fellow," he said, convinced that further sympathy would be only weakening, and dismayed at finding that Regnault had thrown himself face down upon the bed. "Come to yourself. This is all terrible nonsense. The man is not worth the passion you are spending on him."

He spoke in French, for in excitement Regnault lost all command of his limited English. Now he sat up and took Ballantyne's hand, with a look of inexpressible wretchedness on his face.

"Ah, my friend, you know not all. It is not alone that I lose him, though he swore our two souls were as one; but see, he makes me to lose more. He loves, and for a time one is content, and adores. *Mon Dieu!* What power that can make one so adore! Then I care not for faith, nor anything save to content him, and I believe every word — all he would have me do. And now, both are gone."

"What 'both'?"

"Ah, I am not so to be scorned with my weakness as you think. It is not all for him this grief. It is what I am made to do. Because he will have no marriage; because he has said that we may wed the ideal, and know in that the highest love, and that whom he loves must be ready to renounce, that I write at last to my little Marguerite, who waits at home, that she must wait no more; that another will be better for her. We were betrothed; yes, but he makes me see a man's power is lost for the world when he sinks it in one woman, and I had world power I must use. And now when I believe him no more, a veil falls away; I lose Marguerite, who is proud, and has made no sign, and I lose my faith, that was strong, so strong — I could live for him only. It is but yesterday he has said, 'Réné, you are but one. You have my affection, but think you my work can rest on one? Be strong, and live as I have taught you, and you have recompense in that.' His eyes are hard. His hand has no more sought mine. And then I know I am forsaken, and there is no return. Why have you not warned all — you who knew?"

He turned upon Ballantyne fiercely.

"I will tell it. All shall know," he said. "Not one shall believe in him more. And this Norton! I would kill him if he too cared, but he cares not. *Il tend la joue*, but he cares not for the kiss that waits. Ah, *infame!*"

He dropped his head in his hands and sat silent,

nor would he reply to the few words that Ballantyne spoke. More were useless, and as he heard Percival's step he left the room and beckoned him to his own.

"Do you know the whole of Regnault's story?" he asked.

"I did not till yesterday," Percival answered, with even deeper trouble in his face. "Till then I counted much of his passion pure melodrama and very superfluous. But I have to say that, so far as Morris is concerned, I think him conscientious in the matter."

"How?"

"Because he believes absolutely that to the highest natures, born for service, marriage is not only unnecessary, but a degradation. He would limit it, if he could, to the middle class, and draw on them for recruits for the work to be done."

"And you agree with him?" Ballantyne asked.

"I go with him in part, but only in part, for he has small capacity for understanding the best in a woman, or indeed the best in that relation. At least I must think so from some experiences I have known very recently. I should have no right to mention them if he had not said publicly, the other day, that he let his own engagement linger on for years, because certainly his enthusiasm would lessen and deteriorate if he married. Real marriages, I know, are few, but he goes too far."

"If one dared meddle with these things," Ballantyne said, after a pause, "the inclination would be to write to Regnault's *fiancée*, and tell the real story for

him. Women forgive everything. But I confess I do not see my way clear. Only one thing is plain, and that is that I have no further place here. I do not need to say that for you. I think the same, Percival, but I certainly would recommend a change."

Percival shook his head.

"If we all went," he said, "it would look like concerted action. I don't want to hurt Morris unnecessarily. He will come to his senses soon, and then defection would be only cruelty."

"In any case Regnault must be taken away," Ballantyne replied. "He is quite past judging for himself. I will arrange with him if I can, and then speak to Morris."

To Ballantyne's surprise, next morning Regnault yielded at once, passive misery having succeeded the rage that had devoured him for weeks.

"It is a man of lead you will take with you," was his only comment. "Beware that such weight does not sink your boat and drag you to the bottom with it."

"I have no fear," Ballantyne answered; and after seeing him begin to gather together his effects, aided by Miss Byers, whose quiet comprehension was good for all, he sought Morris in his study, and briefly told him that Regnault needed change, and would leave that afternoon.

The uneasy, roving eyes wore a harder look than Ballantyne had ever seen in them, and as he listened, curious gleams came and went and his face grew pale.

Ballantyne had expected a torrent of opposition, but there was none, though the effort at restraint was fully apparent.

"Your judgment is excellent," he said, with a thinly veiled sneer. "It is best for all concerned that he should go. He has been a cruel disappointment to me."

Ballantyne's eyes searched the strange face involuntarily.

"I confess that the disappointment seems to me to belong entirely to his side," he said; and as Morris met his look darkly, bowed quietly, and left the room, nor did it surprise him, when the hour for leaving came, that Morris failed to appear.

"A sneak, after all," he thought, relieved to have such reasonable ground for returning to his first impressions. He had left a general good-bye, receiving a special one from Dr. Prescott, whose eyes had a look of ill-concealed triumph, and whose extended hand Regnault refused to take. Percival he embraced with fervor.

"Come away, Per-cee-val," he said. "Evil and that man are one. I thought this Paradise, but air of the Inferno blows in it, and there walks Mephisto, and smiles at his doing."

"Wait a little," Percival said, "and you will change. Perhaps soon we shall all be here again, and the clouds quite gone."

Regnault shook his head, and fell again into moody silence, and Ballantyne, who found it impos-

sible to rouse him, and who dreaded its results, sat by him till late into the night, persuading him at last to take the few hours of sleep that could be secured before Fall River was reached. He had telegraphed to Mrs. LeBaron that he was on the way with Regnault, and relied on her wisdom for some way out of the complication which he felt more and more powerless to meet.

Chapter Eighth

"THE old story," Mrs. LeBaron said quietly, when she had listened to Ballantyne's report. "The one good thing in it is that you remain unscathed. That was my terror. As for this poor boy, we must wait a little before I can judge. If his Marguerite can be reached and has large enough soul to comprehend, that will be the best cure. He is only one of many who have had to suffer."

"Then you understood Morris and knew his tendencies. This is nothing new to you? In such case, why have you not spoken."

Ballantyne's look held both surprise and indignation, and he checked himself suddenly. "Of course you had reason, and, knowing you, I believe it a good one."

"I think it so, yet I cannot tell. Being one of the sucked oranges myself may alter my point of view, but when, after a year of closest intimacy with Dunbar and myself, he dropped us absolutely for a time, we had to form some theory to work on."

"For yourselves or for others?"

"For both. He had transferred his allegiance to

one of our nearest friends with the same fervor that had marked that to us, and with such absolute calmness of disregard, that we had to conclude he was practically oblivious of offence or injury. When in turn it passed on, from people old enough to comprehend, in part at least, to a girl I loved, that was different, and I interfered. It did no good. She broke her heart, for he soon exhausted such possibilities as she had and turned to her brother. Since then, I think, no woman has had any serious entanglement with him, and since his last retreat in Italian monasteries he scouts marriage, and spends his superabundant affection on boys."

"But this all being so, why did you not explain his characteristics before I went there?"

"Because he was once, and in some ways remains, my friend, and because I saw that he was not likely to touch you. Do you not find that the better you know him, the less you feel capable of judging him?"

"That is true, but he is dangerous."

"Not often, I think. There is absolute genuineness in his learning and his method of imparting it. The life he would have his followers lead is in many points a noble one. What right have I to prevent any chance that may come to him, of devotion or unselfishness? It is the want of them that ruins him, and yet, up to a certain point, he gives them like water. It is too complex a nature to judge by ordinary laws."

"Granted," Ballantyne said. "But there are a few

very simple ones that must govern even genius, are there not? I admit the power, but I have found also a substratum of boor and sneak, which crops out at critical moments, and is as much the real man as the others. He will shirk responsibility, and I am not at all certain he would not lie fluently, for his temperament is so exaggerated that what he wishes to believe becomes truth. To me it seems right to warn, where warning can be of any use."

"But when his fascination has begun to work, the time has past," said Mrs. LeBaron. "That is the sad part of it. How much have you ever learned from a warning, John? To me, at least in my younger days, it was always a challenge to test the thing for myself, and I do not find that human nature in this generation has altered."

"Then experience counts for nothing, you think?"

"Always nothing, if brought to bear directly. Its only mission is an indirect one. The accumulated product passes on, and that is where heredity and progress join hands. You learn to avoid certain things, and the child follows suit; but every 'thou shalt not,' since time began, has been but a challenge to mankind, and remains so."

"And this is all an old story to you?" Ballantyne asked after a pause, in which he had frowned again.

"I wish it were not, but his life here meant a series of changes. There were so many splendid boys, for he has unerring taste; he knows a fine thing when he sees it, — who have gone through the miseries this

poor thing Regnault knows, though I do think an American can bring philosophy to bear more easily than a Frenchman. With one or two it has made cynics. For the rest, I think it has been an invaluable experience. Are you not yourself the richer for your time with him?"

Ballantyne looked at her silently.

"It is a tribute to his power," he said, at last, "that I have to say yes, and to admit that in many points he has the secret of life. Intellectually there is something superb in his quality. There he is honest. For the rest, I cannot judge him. Spiritually he is—"

"Neither you nor any man can tell what, least of all himself," Mrs. LeBaron said, as he hesitated. "He has intellectual convictions, and so fervidly that they stimulate soul-life as fully to himself as to others. But the real fire is not there. I doubt if it ever will be."

"It is a bale-fire at present, and his community will end in smoke if it blazes much longer," Ballantyne said, and rose to see Regnault, then turned impulsively.

"Does it ever, has it ever occurred to you," he said, "that there is a mystery about this being of double nature, double dealing, and double personality?"

Mrs. LeBaron looked at him steadily.

"Make your words clear, John. What do you suspect?"

"I have ceased to suspect. I believe. It is a woman."

"Your proof?"

Ballantyne threw out his hands with a gesture of infinite contempt. "Proof? There is but one method for that. But I caught the other day, as little Madame Bergmann hovered about him, an expression of the Inferno itself, and yet a childish sort of glee as well, — an expression that held a diabolical rejoicing in her useless and hopeless infatuation, — a glee that power was in him to produce it. A woman taking revenge on all women for some suffering of the past; a woman in her power to hold and play with men, and the man's brain, — the intellect of a hundred men in one, dominating the whole. If I believed in a Mephisto I should say this was his present reincarnation. You are silent. My cousin, you must answer me. I cannot go back without it."

"I cannot," she said. "This is all barest suspicion. I have felt it a thousand times, and, save to Dunbar, always kept silence. He shared it with me, yet could never feel sure. It is, was, only instinct like mine. What right had we to interfere with his own plan of living? Rosa Bonheur chose the same dress. Oh, I know this is different," as Ballantyne made an impatient movement. "Of course it is different."

"He has worn this dress always?"

"By no means. In the first years after he came over from every point in the civilized world it seemed — for he seemed familiar with all — he wore the ordinary man's dress, only that he chose the velvet coat of the

artist, and was usually taken for an artist. Certainly he knows more of real art than any dozen of them. He had been in the Austrian army, it was said. In a Greek insurrection we know, for friends of ours saw him in Athens just afterward, and he boasted of his usual fortune in coming out without a scratch. In these later years he has been practically a monk for three of them at least, for he came and went from the Franciscan convent in Rome. Don't you see it can't be? It is simply an unheard-of combination of traits and gifts, this subtle, freakish, woman-side, a psychological puzzle. He wears this monk's robe at will. I have seen him also in a priest's cassock."

Ballantyne threw back his head as if to dismiss the subject.

"That is his present dress as he goes back and forth to New York. But in the study I have seen him in the white robe of a Bramahcharin, and he now and then puts on one given him by a whirling dervish. He says he cannot work save in the loosest possible garment."

"Balzac had the same method, you remember. This man is of all faiths and all nations," Mrs. LeBaron said. "It is a mystery we cannot solve. In fact, as I have often seen him surrounded by adoring women, I have thought myself a lunatic for my own conviction. I have no facts. It is only the sudden outcropping of ways that are distinctively a woman's."

"Seraphita and Seraphitus?" said Ballantyne.

"Don't, I beg you. It is sacrilege. This burly monk is a new *rôle* to us all, but not at all astonishing. You must confess he fills it well. The wonder is, if we are right, that Jesuit eyes and brains have not long ago fathomed the mystery and forbidden further masquerade. There is diabolism in it. Do not go back, John, unless you must. Stay with us at Plymouth. You need the simplicity of a man like Nathan Allen to take the bad taste out of your mouth. Plymouth is good working ground. Regnault will be content there, I think, and it will give you opportunity to study up the colonial background, as well as to listen to more stories from Nathan, who is as absorbed in telling as you in listening. Here he is now, and he will beg you to stay, if begging be necessary."

"It is not, I assure you. You do not need to be told it," Ballantyne said, rising hastily as the stately head of Colonel Allen appeared in the doorway, where he paused for a moment for a word with the child who had followed him. "Do not be troubled," Ballantyne added low. "We will not speak of this again unless there is grave reason," and he turned to the new-comer, who soon proposed an adjournment to the shore, where in a sheltered corner Regnault had already brought his book and great umbrella, renouncing both at the will of the two younger children, who proposed to bury him in the sand. He seemed quiet and untroubled, and entered into the play so heartily that Ballantyne, who had fallen into

the habit of watching him anxiously, turned away with the strongest sense of relief he had felt since leaving New York, and began strolling up and down the shore with the older man.

The life lived here had no counterpart in anything he had ever known. In Colonel Allen, the son of Mrs. LeBaron's oldest brother, and very nearly her own age, he found a singular but delightful mixture of the two generations. The family had come down but a few weeks before, — a quiet wife, who adored him, three sons, two of whom were in Harvard, and the two little girls, barely beyond early childhood. A type of good fellowship was with them all unlike anything his English life had given, — a comradeship that seemed to him the ideal of intercourse, a family life so sweet and high that he marvelled as he looked, and on all sides sought for its counterpart elsewhere with a faith that in such life lay the promise of the new era to come.

Colonel Allen himself, though now judge in one of the Boston courts, preferred his old title, cleaving to every recollection of war days, and passionately loyal to the cause for which he had fought. A brilliant talker, he found in Ballantyne an ardent listener to every scrap of reminiscence, and they had spent hours together daily.

Up to this time Ballantyne had happened to meet but few who had taken part in the struggle, and he had marvelled often at the oblivion, almost total, which seemed to have fallen upon it all. To bury

bitterness was well, yet it seemed to him that even the memory of the cause had died out, and the younger generation growing up had small knowledge of its meaning, and small honor for those who survived. But for these sons, at least, his conclusion might be altered. They were a different order from most of the Harvard men he had happened to meet: simpler, more in earnest, and devoted to the father, who seemed rather elder brother and friend than parent.

To go over the whole background in the light of knowledge like his, to find day after day what love and loyalty lived in him, and what supreme faith for the future he had battled for, ruled his life and thought, was for Ballantyne an element that gave at last to his own contrary and vexing impressions the form they had lacked. No matter how Philistinism or mammon might come uppermost, what flaws show themselves at will, and the whole structure even at moments seem toppling to its fall, below, strong and sure, were the foundations built on everlasting right.

"When need came, the men were there. When need comes again, their places will be filled as well," the colonel said, with a lifting of the gray head that showed itself ready still for the storming of any forlornest hope. "The South knows it all now. They were glorious fighters. I bow to the memory of Lee and Stonewall Jackson. They were patriots both, and they know now where their blunder was."

"But Morris, — you know him, Mrs. LeBaron tells me," — said Ballantyne, "insists that the Massachu-

setts element, for instance, was chiefly *dilettante*. It was a fashion to join a regiment, and they flocked like so many sheep after a leader."

"A fashion?" Colonel Allen said, his deep voice deeper than ever. "It was a fashion that led Robert Shaw and Theodore Winthrop to their death, and buried the first under the negroes who filled that trench at Fort Wagner; a fashion that made our best ready for death on the battlefield or starvation in rebel prisons. These men sacrificed more in one hour than this dog will do in a lifetime of mouthing."

"Father!" Charles Allen interposed, "that is a little steep, you know."

"How should he know, coming here when it was all over, what it had meant? And how dare he pose as teacher and leader, when he has only a sneer for the one holy thing in this mammon-loving century?" returned his father, hotly. "Straight through every shame we have known, political treachery, and corruption, trust betrayed, honor a name, lying the foundation of success, I fall back on what has been, and what will be. The stream flows deep. I care not what sticks and straws, what carrion even, float on its surface, — its water is for the healing of the nations."

"'Triumphant democracy,'" said the younger, but his eyes belied the slight sarcasm of his tone.

"That demonstration may pass," said the colonel. "It is a mere cock-a-doodle-doo, well crowed and reassuring, perhaps, for those who are tempted to believe

midnight a permanent state, but the merest material satisfaction in huge crops, long railroad lines, bonanza farms, and big fortunes. The real America is not there, any more than the typical American is embodied in a Jay Gould."

"That typical American lingers in the background," said Charles Allen.

"Not a very remote one, my boy. Turn to Lincoln, if you want one. It is his name that means the promise of more like him, and there are men in our midst to-day, going their quiet way, who in any crisis would show what power simple right carries with it. When the roll is called they will answer."

"I do not doubt it," Ballantyne replied. "But in the mean time here are a thousand forms of injustice and oppression, and all culminating with either unconsciousness or entire ignoring of their existence. Your labor question is as serious as the English, and you have not yet begun to consider the meaning of the general discontent and revolt."

"And I doubt if we shall fully till blood has been spilled," said Colonel Allen. "We are a curiously indifferent people, easy-going and careless to the last moment; but when we rouse, in the end we learn and remember. There is something in the old words, 'Without shedding of blood is no remission of sins.' It is a clarifying process, if nothing else. I tell you, Ballantyne, you need not fear."

"I am speaking from a multitude of impressions," Ballantyne began.

"You need more time, my dear fellow. You have scampered through the country, and have, I know, a blue-book of facts and impressions, but you must live on and settle to your own work before you come to any knowledge that will bear fruit in life. I look to you, to my boys here, to every young fellow whose very scoff at the shame of things is a promise of better doings, to give us the text we must live by. It is war still, but it may be made a bloodless victory. Here is something you must let me repeat, — words spoken by one who fought and who remembers."

The colonel paused a moment, and his eyes lightened as he went on:

"'Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire. It was given us to learn at the outset that life is a "profound and passionate thing." While we are permitted to scorn nothing but indifference, and do not pretend to undervalue the worldly rewards of ambition, we have seen with our own eyes beyond and above the gold fields the snowy heights of honor, and it is for us to bear the report to those who come after us.'"

"What an old war-horse it is," said Charles Allen, who had joined them, and whose hand sought his father's nervous, sinewy one, with the instinctive sympathy that united them. "It is frightfully bad form, you know, to care for anything so much as you care just for being alive to-day, on American soil."

"Thank God that I am, and that it is my birth-

right!" the colonel said solemnly, and walked away, too greatly moved for further words.

"I wish I could look at it all with your eyes, Ballantyne," young Allen said as they rose from the rocks where for a few minutes they had sat down, and continued the interrupted walk. "I don't want to be too cocksure, and that is the tendency of the wholesale faith in ourselves in which we have come up. Rather that, though, than the wholesale depreciation that a good many of our men seem to think is the only correct thing."

He paused suddenly, for something like the howl of a madman sounded from below, with a shriek from the children, who came running.

"He is dreadfully sick. He bit his letter," the oldest cried; and Ballantyne broke into a run as he saw Regnault dash toward the point, just in time to prevent his throwing himself in, and finding sharp struggle necessary.

"This time you shall not," Regnault cried; but Ballantyne threw himself upon him, calling to young Allen, who in a moment had added his force, the strength of two now necessary to hold the wild creature in their hands. As he fought, a letter dropped from his pocket, and even in the midst of the struggle Ballantyne saw and recognized the familiar handwriting of Morris.

"He have dismissed me. I go back no more! I will live no more!" Regnault cried. Then his clutch relaxed, he fell back suddenly, and they saw

that he had fainted, not to be revived by any means brought to bear.

To hail a passing wagon, lift him in and return as speedily as possible to the house, was the only method; and shortly they had laid him on his own bed, and watched the color coming back to his death-like face. He opened his eyes silently at last, slowly, as if it were hardly worth the effort, looked about for a moment, a look of unspeakable wretchedness in their clear blue, and closed them again. A silence so unnatural that Ballantyne had rather have encountered raving was upon him, and it held him day after day. The children came and went softly, and he touched them for a moment, then turned away. Only Mrs. LeBaron had any power over him, and even with her he seldom spoke.

"He renounces me. I see him no more," was the only explanation of his state; and the pitying woman who watched him knew that the inevitable experience she sorrowed over in more than one was working its will in a temperament that had never learned how best to bear pain, and sought to teach him, if might be, that escape was still possible, but only through his own will. He answered nothing. Brooding melancholy had settled down, and the passage was swift into a state from which not even she could rouse him. It was a burden too great for this peaceful home, and Ballantyne presently took him up to Boston, proposing to consult an expert alienist, and in the meantime installing him in his own rooms.

Ashton's sympathies had been enlisted, and he made many advances to Regnault, who rejected them with barest courtesy. To argue was useless. Any help must come from within, and the fierce brooding that consumed him was not ground in which any seed of patience or of hope could find present root. A day or two in which he sat with bowed head and folded arms, lost in misery, and then as Ballantyne came in one afternoon, later than usual and troubled that he had been so long delayed, a note lay on the table and Regnault was gone.

"I must see him again," it read. "You are of a goodness inconceivable, but it makes nothing till I have talked with him, and made him to know what I suffer."

To telegraph to Percival of his probable appearance was all that remained to be done, and Ballantyne returned to Plymouth hardly less anxious than before as to what results might be, but relieved by a letter from Percival, which came a day later.

"I was fearful of what might happen," he wrote. "But fortunately Norton has been called away for a few days by the illness of his mother, and so Regnault found the field his own. Morris welcomed him with some show of cordiality, and for the present at least Regnault is comparatively calm and at ease. I will keep you informed as to the course of affairs, but am hoping now that I can induce Regnault to go away before Norton returns."

"It has passed out of my hands," Ballantyne

thought, with a long breath of relief, settling within his own mind to remain with Mrs. LeBaron the greater part of the time, since she had begged for it, and his own wish was one with hers. Early afternoon brought a telegram.

"Come at once, if possible," it read. "In great trouble;" and Ballantyne, with a clouded look, paused for a moment to say a reassuring word to Colonel Allen, who had said, "Nothing serious, I hope," and then went on to take counsel with Mrs. LeBaron.

"I cannot refuse," he said; "and yet it is certain there will be conflict of some sort. I want no words with Morris, for he is hardly in his senses at present."

"Percival's common sense will prevent any scene," Mrs. LeBaron said, but her face was anxious. "I hoped you were through with all of them," she added. "Where his own desires are involved the man stops at nothing, and even scandal would be indifferent to him. Thank Heaven, there is no woman in the case."

"That is an alleviating circumstance," Ballantyne said, with a half smile, "and will make things easier. That phase may come later, if some of them have their way."

"Heaven help them if they do," said Mrs. LeBaron, fervently.

"And Heaven help him no less," Ballantyne said, and turned to the time-table in the hall. "I cannot get up in season for the steamboat train," he said. "So we will have supper together peaceably, and I

will go up at eight, and on to New York at midnight. I shall not remain there one unnecessary hour. I want this atmosphere to go back with me; not that. This last time with you is worth all the rest. Without it I do not know how I could have answered Marion."

He had not spoken her name since the evening in which he had told her story, but there was a new confidence in look and tone.

"Whatever comes of this," he said; "and there is sharp trouble, else Percival would never have called me back, I seem to have no more doubt of the future. It is not presumption, though it sounds like it. It is an inward conviction, deep as life itself, that fulfilment of desire is near, and I shall know the best of life. If Marion still desires it, there is the old house at home, and she shall feel it home, and divide her time between the two."

Mrs. LeBaron looked up quickly, but his face was in shadow.

"Then your own standpoint has changed?" she said. "America is not as essential to you as it was."

"It is more so, I think," he answered, slowly. "But I have gone through a world of disenchantment and readjustment, to find myself at last on solid ground, from which I am not likely to be dislodged. I can estimate values better. I am certain as to the future. That life at home, the necessities involved, had brought about abnormal sensitiveness, and a homesick longing so strong that only yielding to it, and being carried for a time where it would, could bring

the flood to natural levels. I think we were both abnormal, and that this year had meant for her no less than for me, — readjustment, and a better estimate of what things are worth. In any case life without her is impossible. We must work it out as we can, but I believe she will care to come home again, and that life in the old house will renew itself in such form as it has never known."

"It is a prophecy," Mrs. LeBaron said; but tears were in her eyes as she turned away hastily lest he should see them. "Dear soul; brave, true soul," she thought. "I wish you need never be at the mercy of any woman's whim. He is worth the utmost devotion the noblest can give him, and who knows what the end will be? That the breath that goes to the 'no' of a foolish girl can be a blast strong enough to blight a life like that! It is horrible that human beings have such power to save or destroy."

"There 's the stuff for a good soldier in him," said Colonel Allen, as they turned from the station to which they had accompanied him; Dorothy and Margaret, the two little girls, clinging to him to the last, and deeply disconsolate at the wresting from them of a playmate so fascinating. "He walks like one, and there is a look in his eye that would mean mischief, if mischief were needed."

"It seems to be needed now," Mrs. LeBaron said, with a sudden impulse to throw part of her burden on these broad and kindly shoulders, and she gave such outline of the tale as was needed. It did

not require many words. Morris had seldom had much discussion, for heartily as Colonel Allen detested him, he respected her loyalty to the past. Now he listened silently, nodding now and then as if his own conviction were affirmed.

"No nationality comes amiss, it seems," he said grimly, as she ended. "It is a catholic sort of maw, and calls for all sorts. Don't fret, Mary. This is a type he cannot swallow whole. He has his match, and you need not fear but that Ballantyne will find a way to straighten things."

"There is no straightening for a skein so tangled," Mrs. LeBaron said, her voice still troubled.

"Cut it, then."

"Ah, but when human lives and souls are the threads, cutting is not so easy."

"That is pure sentiment. A sharp cut and actual cautery, and the deed is done, and life can be lived afterward. Put it away, Mary, and now drown the thought of that blatant Scotch Frenchman, or whatever he is, in a game of whist."

Chapter Ninth

THE little settlement wore its usual aspect, a blending of solid and substantial past embodied in the old house, with the ephemeral and dubious present of the flimsy cottages. Ballantyne, who had passed from one apprehension to another as he pondered what the telegram might imply, lifted the lion's-head knocker, and then letting it drop, went in with the impulse to first find Percival and discover the real state of things before he encountered other members of the family.

The study door stood open, but the room was empty, nor was there any sound of life save low voices from a distant room. As he paused for a moment, the door at the head of the stairs opened suddenly and Morris stood there, haggard, dishevelled, and pale as if with watching.

"I wanted the doctor," he said, with no apparent consciousness of Ballantyne's presence, and shut the door as that to Percival's room opened, and Percival himself came out, lifting his finger in sign of silence. Ballantyne took the hand put out to him silently, nor

did either speak till Percival had led him down to the parlor and closed the doors.

"You are in a private lunatic asylum at present," he said, with an attempt at a smile, "and I am just on the border myself, Ballantyne. I knew no one else to turn to."

He was deadly pale and worn, with the same look of long and anxious watching that had showed on Morris's face.

"We have had three diabolical weeks," he went on. "I did not write, because I hoped to settle matters without troubling you, and since the affair, there has been no moment in which I dared leave Regnault."

"An affair? A duel, then, is the outcome of the Brotherhood system?"

"No, but as bad. Regnault has stabbed Norton, and taken morphine on his own account, a horrible and profoundly unnecessary misery for all concerned. Morris is as much a lunatic as the rest, and I am laboring to keep it all quiet, with no hint for the reporters, who would swoop down on us like so many vultures on carrion if but a breath got out. I want you to help, for you will understand."

"What I can," Ballantyne answered, suppressing all tokens of his disgust for the entire complication. "Now tell me briefly as you choose what the extraordinary melodrama means."

"That is precisely what it seems," Percival said. "You would say I was dealing with tolerably well

defined realities, but the cause is to me so preposterously inadequate, that I wait involuntarily to hear the curtain ring down. It all began in a passionate scene in Morris's study. Norton, who returned the day after you left, had thought things over in his absence, realized that he did not belong here by any natural affinity, and promised his grandfather to break loose at once and go abroad. He came out late in the evening, and found Dr. Prescott with Morris. They never got on, you know. The doctor has a sneering way, and he said I don't know what, but enough to excite Norton, and then left. I heard voices below me rising and falling, and then Morris cried out my name. I ran down. He stood there sobbing like a boy, his arms around Norton, and a flood of wild words pouring out, — entreaties, threats, I know not what.

"'Percival, you love me; make him see that I must not be left,' he cried as he saw me, and Norton struggled away and came to me. 'I think it would kill me to live with him another day,' he said, and sunk into a chair half fainting. Regnault in the meantime had been lying asleep on Morris's lounge, and roused at last to hear this frantic appeal. He rushed to him. 'You have me, *mon maître!* You have me; it suffices!' he cried, and tried to clasp him. Then Morris, whose sense was quite gone, gave him one great thrust backward. 'Away, you stupid brute!' he said. 'I was through with you long ago.' Regnault fell back and looked at him,

and the devil was in his eye. Then he gave a snarl and spring; it was like some wild beast in sudden fury. He caught the stiletto, the Persian thing on Morris's table, and dashed at Norton. 'It is you, the cause, the cause!' he shrieked out, and struck at him; but Morris flung himself against him and the blade glanced aside. It was a deep flesh-wound only, but Norton was, it seems, on the brink of fever, and he had no force to stand up against the whole horror of it.

"Regnault came to himself as he saw blood flow, and begged madly for forgiveness, but Morris spurned him away. He was incapable of anything but loathing, and the poor wretch crept to his room and swallowed all the morphine of his sleeping-powders. It was a hard pull to save his life, and he is stupid and heavy still. We must get him away at once. You see what need there was of you. It is quite unreasonable, for I have no claim; not the slightest."

"You have every claim," Ballantyne said quietly, as Percival's voice broke. "You know well for what willing service I am ready in any cause of yours. Which madman is to be dealt with first?"

"Regnault. I do not know what may happen, for Morris has a curiously relentless streak. I have made him see the seriousness of the charge and urged him to go home, at least for a time. A steamer sails to-morrow afternoon. If he knows that your mind is the same as mine in the matter, perhaps we can get him away quietly. He is hysterical as a girl, and

I have had to give all my energy to keeping him quiet on Norton's account."

"Is young Marston in the midst of it all?"

"No, thank Heaven! He went off for a few days just before it happened, but he is terribly disaffected. It seems Regnault, who was fond of him, you know, wrote to him that he must not return, and Marston wrote to Miss Byers to ask what it meant. In his letter to her he said that personally he should be glad enough not to, for Morris had lost all interest in him, but as the engagement was for the year, he supposed it must go on. She brought it to me, and I wrote him to return, as Norton would very soon leave. Once clear the coast, and things will be better."

"They will never be better," Ballantyne said, with sudden decision. "Percival, you have had your year of novitiate, and you know it is true. Come back with me, and let me leave you safe in my rooms till I come again. Let this man work out his own problem. He shall not spoil yours any longer."

"No man can hurt me but myself. That was said for me long ago," Percival replied. "My place is here. I shall bridge over the gulf this explosion has made, and Morris will need me. It is poor friendship that stops short in face of an emergency."

"I think the better of him that you cleave to him so," Ballantyne said. "Go your way, then, as we all must, each in his own path, but the place is ready for you if you will."

"You are solid and sure as bed rock," Percival answered, with a look of deepest gratitude and confidence, and then, as a sound came from Regnault's room, went toward it and motioned Ballantyne to follow.

Regnault accepted his appearance passively, too sunk in wretchedness for wonder or any emotion outside himself, and for a time it seemed impossible to rouse him, or make him feel the urgent necessity for action. It came at last, and he listened attentively to Ballantyne and his plan for him.

"I have but little money," he said. "It cannot be done."

"Here is all you want," Ballantyne said, reassuringly. "That need make no difficulty. Now I am going back to town, and everything will be arranged for you, so that you need have no trouble; Percival will pack everything, and we shall be with you till you start."

He spoke as if to a child, for Regnault had caught his hand, and looked at him, his deep blue eyes large with tears, nor till Percival took his place was it easy to break away. The arrangements in town were soon made. He secured a comfortable stateroom, with no other occupant, for there were few passengers on the list, and then sought the purser, an alert and wiry little Frenchman, who promised all possible attention to the partial invalid Ballantyne represented Regnault to be.

He would bring him in the early afternoon the

next day, he planned; see him off, for the hour of sailing was at three o'clock, and then go on himself by boat to Boston, there being no other complication to which he owed any attention.

Regnault listened silently as Ballantyne on his return told him that all arrangements were made, and even murmured thanks as he took his hand, and for a moment laid it on his burning forehead.

"The ocean wind will blow away all this heat," Ballantyne said soothingly, for tears were running down the haggard young cheeks.

"How shall I leave him?" Regnault said. "Who will forgive him more than I? Oh, another, who has suffered also, knows all. It may be as he thinks;" and he repeated softly, as a dirge, his old passion and force quenched in weakness and sorrow:

"'*De ces bien passagers que l'on goute à demi,*
Le meilleur qui nous reste est un ancien ami.
On se brouille, on se fuit, qu'un hasard nous rassemble,
On s'approche, on sourit, la main touche la main,
Et nous nous souvenons que nous marchions ensemble,
Que l'âme est immortelle, et qu'hier c'est demain.'

"*Et qu'hier c'est demain*," he repeated. "*Mais non, mais non. Il ne revient plus.*"

He rose and began to gather together some loose articles about the room, and Ballantyne presently left him and went down to the late supper, conscious that he had not eaten since morning, and glad to meet the friendly face of Miss Byers, which showed traces of trouble through its Quaker calm.

"You were very good to come," she said. "I feared you would not. It is a serious time for all, but no one knows."

"And no one will know," Ballantyne said, reassuringly. "There is not the slightest reason why they should. In such matters it is sometimes quite right to take the law into one's own hands."

"I am glad you believe so," Miss Byers said. She had looked at him anxiously as if dreading what his reply might be. "I feared it might be only self-interest that spoke in me, but you would not mind that, I know."

There was trust in tone and look, and Percival smiled as his eyes met Ballantyne's with the same expression. Supper was even cheerful. They drew their chairs nearer as it ended, and Ballantyne listened to Miss Byers's report of the situation from the Quaker point of view, and the evasions forced upon her by curious cottagers, who could not understand so much sudden illness in a proverbially healthy place, or why Regnault had completely disappeared from view.

Clouds had settled down at sunset, and a chilly fog crept from the marshes slowly up the hill, stealing in at every opening.

"It is the one thing I do not like about the place," Miss Byers said at last, rising to close the door, and pausing with the knob in her hand as the sound of a distant shot was heard. "Some gunner," she said. "It is September, and they will not leave a bird. To

shoot at night, though, — of course it can't be a gunner."

A sudden change came over Percival's face.

"Regnault is alone. He must not be," he said, and went quickly to the stairs. In a moment he was back, and his face was pale.

"The room is empty," he said. "Ballantyne, I ought never to have left him."

He had opened one door and another as he spoke, and as each room showed itself empty, dashed out, followed by Ballantyne.

"Go to the cottages," the latter said. "He may be there."

"No, he shrunk from them all," Percival returned. "There is just one chance, — the old summer-house in the orchard. If he is not there, he is in the ravine, for the sound came from that direction."

The two went together through the orchard, looking from side to side as they went, with the vague hope that from any one of these thickets of lilac or syringa the figure of Regnault might emerge. But neither there nor in any corner of the rambling grounds was there trace of him, and they went on silently toward the ravine, pausing only while Percival went in for the bull's-eye lantern hanging by the kitchen door.

The ravine lay between the hill on which the settlement stood, and another much lower one between them and the marsh road. Deep gullies were on either side, bare now save for overhanging, twisted

growth of wild vines and shrubs, but where, in early spring, the water ran in torrents. Beyond lay the ravine, rock-strewn from the blastings made in cutting down the hill road, and filled with dense undergrowth, — here a mass of shadow, there climbing at will to fling itself about the trees grouped at the end. A path little used but still well marked led through it, and Percival went on swiftly toward the end, the light from the bull's-eye serving only to intensify the shadows into which he peered.

Suddenly at his feet was something blacker still, a dark heap huddled together; and he fell to his knees and turned the light full on the white face, lifting the limp hand from which the pistol had dropped, and then looking up in horrified silence into Ballantyne's face.

"There is no sign of wound," the latter said, but Percival pointed to a scorched spot on the breast.

"He has shot himself through the heart," he said. "He must have died instantly. Good God, Ballantyne! What will come of it! Poor, wretched soul! Why could we not have saved you from this?"

"Go up for the doctor and his man, and have them bring some sort of litter," Ballantyne said. "I will stay here. He may not he quite dead;" and Percival stumbled away, well nigh incapable of motion, leaving Ballantyne kneeling by the dead man's side.

"Is he quite gone?" he asked, when, after what seemed long delay, Dr. Prescott came down the path

toward him, men with lanterns and a litter following him. He nodded silently as his examination ended, his set face giving no token of feeling beyond a slight paleness, and as silently Ballantyne aided the men in lifting and bearing the body up the hill.

Morris stood at the door as they approached, and his face was ghastly as that of the man he had sent to his death.

"I will not have him brought in here!" he cried. "Take him where you like, but not here!"

Ballantyne looked at him a moment, then motioned the men on.

"Curse you!" Morris said, in sudden fury. "I tell you the house shall not be polluted with that carrion. If he chose to end his own life let him take the consequences, and fare as suicides should. The cross roads and a stake are what he has earned. He has brought torment enough here. Take him elsewhere."

"You are beside yourself," Percival said, with such sternness as Ballantyne had never heard. "Till the coroner has done his work, you have no word to say. Come away."

"The coroner shall not be told. I will have no coroner here," Morris said, no less fiercely; but Miss Byers had motioned the men toward the parlor, and as they placed their burden there, threw over it the sheet she carried, and closed and locked the door behind her. For a moment Morris eyed her savagely, then, yielding to Percival's hand, turned away, and

went up the stairs. She was trembling from head to foot as the door closed behind the pair, and she looked at Ballantyne.

"Is he insane too?" she whispered. "What shall be done? Oh, Mr. Ballantyne, don't go away till all this is over."

"I will not. You may depend upon me," he said, quietly. "It is my affair as much as yours, you know. We must all do for this poor boy whatever there is left to do."

For a moment the quiet little woman burst into sudden tears, choked back indignantly.

"It is so sudden, so horrible," she said, apologetically. "That is why I gave way so. I must go to my sister, for she will be frightened. If you stay, everything will be right as it can be now. Can anything ever be really right again?"

She hurried away, and Ballantyne, as he saw Dr. Prescott approaching, went to meet him and question as to what must first be done. The doctor had acted promptly; a message had been sent to the coroner, who fortunately lived at the foot of the hill, and would be up in the early morning.

"The best thing for every one concerned is a sleeping-powder," he added. "It is the only medicine for such a state of things. I hope no hint of it will get to Norton. He was doing very well this afternoon, but the least excitement would put him back seriously."

"If it can only be kept quiet," Ballantyne said.

"I think it can be, if the coroner has sense. My men are safe enough, for they have worked under my orders a long while, and understand that I mean what I say. Dangerous illness in the house will help things, too, if Morris can be induced to hold his tongue. At present he is a lunatic, and deserves the treatment of one. I wish you to see after Percival and tell him he must sleep. He will go to pieces if he does not."

Professional feeling was uppermost, and his anxiety very genuine. Percival came down as they talked together and easily yielded to his wish.

"Oblivion for a while will be heaven," he said, and he swallowed the powder Dr. Prescott produced, and went away to his own room, leaving him to deal with Morris if he could. Ballantyne refused any sedative. To sleep in the house seemed impossible, and he wandered up and down the old road, lost in pity and in awe over the swift passage of the tormented spirit. What way had it gone, blown by the viewless, elemental wind; or did it linger still, vainly seeking re-entrance to this shattered house of life? Would he cling still to the man he had worshipped, and be for him now a presence neither word nor will could put aside; or had clearer vision already come and made him know that self is inescapable and forever the eternal judge of self?

Wandering up and down, the tension still too strong for sleep, his thought turned at last, as always, toward the centre of every thought and

desire, and now the longing for speech came upon him.

"I will write," he thought. "The year is almost over; will be over when she receives it. A strange time for this first word, but it must be. I cannot wait."

He went softly to his room, and for an hour or two wrote steadily till gray dawn was in the sky, then folding the sheets sealed them in their envelope, and lying down fell into troubled sleep, ending so heavily that he knew nothing more till steps and voices sounded below him, and he woke to find the sunshine of late morning lying across the floor.

Chapter Tenth

BALLANTYNE lingered in his room, shrinking from facing again the horror of yesterday, till, reproaching himself for selfish cowardice, he went down to the dining-room, to find that the legal forms were already over. Percival, aided by Dr. Prescott, had managed matters so admirably that their own testimony had sufficed, and the verdict of "suicide while temporarily insane" gave the answer to outside questioners.

For his own sake, and to do all honor to the name, they would have had the funeral from the house, but Norton's low delirium continued still, and, fearful of its effect, Ballantyne gave the body into the undertaker's hands, with charge of all possible honor and observance for the poor clay. With his own hand he cut a lock or two from the fair head, touching it tenderly for the love that had been there, and glad that the dead face showed quiet and peaceful as life had never known it.

In spite of every care some apprehension of what had happened seemed to have crept into the room where Norton lay, for often he cried out Regnault's

name, and turned away in terror as Morris with passionate tenderness bent over him. For the most part he lay with half-closed eyes, muttering unintelligible words or snatches of verse, the fever burning steadily and the wound refusing to heal. Yet in spite of this, general symptoms were slightly better, and Dr. Prescott, who had sought in vain to replace Morris by a trained nurse, admitted that there was no further danger, and that the care had been admirable.

"Where he learned it I don't know," Dr. Prescott said, as they watched the gloomy wagon making its way down the hill. "But he has nursed him like a woman, and a wise one at that."

"I can tell you," Percival said. "He had an illness of many months himself, the only one in his life, and his sister-in-law nursed him. He has spoken of it sometimes, and her devotion and thoroughness as something he believed only a Scotchwoman could manifest. He was living in Edinburgh then, and could look out always, as he lay, on Arthur's Seat, and it was in talking of the effect of mountains on the spirit that he first mentioned her to me."

"It is an unexpected side," Dr. Prescott said, meditatively, "and when it is over, he will go to pieces himself. He carries a volcano inside there. I thought him pure intellect, and he is like a passionate undisciplined boy and woman mixed up together."

He turned away with a sigh, and Percival looked after him, with a little shake of the head.

"That man has a curiously offensive personality," he said, "a kind of intellectual leopard, but what good there is in him seems uppermost at present."

"Yes, but it is Morris he thinks of rather than Norton," Ballantyne answered. "I should say that aside from professional instinct, which is fairly strong, he detests the poor, young fellow. The kind of affection Morris awakens seems to include all evil passions for everybody else, always excepting yourself, Percival. I shall always tolerate him for your sake."

Percival was silent. Loyalty was still strong, and would keep him so, but Ballantyne knew that the repeated shocks of these later days, if they had not entirely dislodged the idol from his niche, had at least disclosed feet of clay, and rendered continued uncritical faith and worship forever impossible.

"I have only an hour or two more," Ballantyne said presently, as Percival, who had sat with head leaning on his hand, turned to him at last. "Can I help you at all with poor Regnault's matters? Some one must write to his friends, and here is the little packet of hair. I hope his mother is not living."

"She is, and worships him," Percival said, rising. "A letter came from her this morning. I knew the writing, for he has shown me some of them. He wrote the address last night, and left it lying there on the table by this box of photographs."

"It is not possible he knew all these people," Ballantyne said in amazement, for the long box held certainly two hundred, and they were tossed in as if

some one had grown weary of examining them, and piled all in at once.

"They are Morris's," Percival returned. "Poor Regnault had a fancy that he could make out the story of his life from these faces, and often looked them over in the study. He would make up groups, and say to Morris, 'These belong together. You knew them when you felt or thought so and so;' and Morris sometimes looked at him almost aghast. 'You are a diviner of spirits,' he said more than once. 'How is it that you know the thing that was?' Day before yesterday Regnault asked for them, and I brought them to him, but he soon tossed them aside. I must straighten them, for Morris's sense of order is so strong that the look of that thing would distress him seriously."

"I will do it," Ballantyne said, and sat down by the table, finding, as he turned them out, a congregation that might well have stirred the curiosity and interest of the most indifferent. Many were dated, and with the giver's signature; names familiar in letters and art, from modern Greek, through the whole gamut of nationalities. Now and then he paused to look at one more attractive than the rest, and said to himself, "Are you still untouched fruit, or only a husk of some cast aside relation?" For the most part he shuffled them quickly into orderly packets, but suddenly his face changed and a slight exclamation escaped him. Percival turned and saw that he held two of the photographs in his hand;

one a small card and one of the early specimens of the art, dark and imperfect, yet still bearing evident relationship to the later and larger one, with a date of ten years after, and the familiar name of a London photographer on Oxford Street.

"Do you know the names of the unsigned portraits?" Ballantyne asked.

"A good many of them; yes," Percival said. "It is a fact that the story of Morris's life is, just as Regnault fancied it, in that box. These two I know well. They are portraits of the girl and later the woman to whom he was engaged, and who is, I think, still living; but he has never told me her name, for which I am very glad, as he tells most things, and this was by no means his."

"They are like an acquaintance of mine," Ballantyne said indifferently, and laid them with the rest; but Percival noticed that the surprised look did not at once leave his face, and that he sat for a few minutes lost in thought.

There was reason. The face in the two portraits was that of Barbara Ryde, and the later one, precisely as she had been in his earliest recollection of her. How she would rage at knowing it here in this mass of accumulation, turned over by strange hands, and commented on by strange tongues. With Morris's effusive tendencies, what security was there that the name might not, in any sudden burst of confidence, become as common property as the portraits? For a moment his hand moved toward them. The tempta-

tion was strong to take possession and at once destroy. As her lifelong friend he had the right. Then he checked himself, but the mystery was as confounding as each new phase of the owner's character.

One question followed another. How had he known her, and where, and if acknowledged lover, how could it be that no hint had ever been given him by any of the old friends, who must have known? It might, however, have been quite in secret, and as he thought he settled in his own mind that this would be Morris's method. It was even possible that beyond themselves no one had known, but he resented fiercely the shameful obtuseness that kept the photographs there, and the more shameful self-revealment that lay in his confession of what phase of life they represented. Evidently her fortune had had no weight with him, a thing quite in harmony with all his theories as to money.

He looked up at last to find Percival's eyes fixed upon him.

"There is many a type of woman in that box, and you puzzle over them evidently as Regnault did," he said. "Morris's tastes are very catholic. There is a streak of Goethe in him. In fact he often seems to me a repetition of him in many ways. He is an experimenter by instinct, and he looks at each fresh case in an almost purely impersonal sort of way, as common men cannot."

"Thank Heaven, they have not reached his stage of development!" Ballantyne said, bitterly. "Per-

cival, I shall say nothing to you that I am not ready to say to his face, but I wish I could make you drop the whole thing. You do not belong here, and you never will. You need not answer. This is the last impulse to which I mean to yield, but believe me, I have reason on my side, and never more so than at this moment."

"Whatever is to be makes its own path," Percival said, and his look seemed to carry assurance that fear for him need not be felt.

Ballantyne, after the work of packing ended, sat down by the table, and wrote to Regnault's mother a letter which, in his own mind, was equally for the sad-hearted girl who had loved him, telling the story in the gentlest phrase that came, but finding no words that could make it anything but the horror it must always represent. When he ended, the hour for leaving had already come, was even slightly past. He made no attempt to see Morris, glad even that the sick-room held him fast, and prevented words which he was far too worn and too unbalanced to hear, but which must some day be spoken.

"I must go with you," Percival said, after he had given a hasty good-bye to Miss Byers. "I must have the last possible bit of you, unless you had rather go alone."

"Not I," Ballantyne replied. "You could do only one thing more satisfactory, and that is to come all the way."

Percival smiled silently, and the two made their way

down the hill, speaking but little, but each glad of the other's companionship. They had reached the turn, and for a moment Ballantyne paused, looking down to the sordid town below, and back toward the old house.

A figure ran down the road and waved its arms, and as it drew nearer he saw that it was Morris. Percival too had turned, and looked apprehensively toward him.

"There is something wrong," he said. "Perhaps Norton is worse," and went swiftly back toward him. Ballantyne hesitated, then followed, and came face to face with Morris, breathless from running and for the minute incapable of speech. His eyes were on Ballantyne's face with a directness he had never seen there, and he faced him with a dignity equally unfamiliar.

"You sail on Saturday, I am told," he said, "and yet you were going with no word for me. Have I earned that at your hands?"

"You were shut in the sick-room," Ballantyne began.

"Bah!" Morris broke in. "The sick-room had no barricade. No; you did not wish to see me. Stay, Percival," as Percival made a motion of retreat. "You too are disaffected, and it is my right to know how and why. Sit here," he added, pointing to a log lying on the side of the road, and screened by a wild grapevine which hung in long festoons from the tree at one side. "You may never return, Ballantyne. I have the right to ask why you, a righteous man, are willing to wrong me?"

"Have I wronged you?" Ballantyne said gently, for in spite of full conviction, as he looked at him, sympathy and pity both were strong. "I have taken what came from yourself and drawn inevitable conclusions. That is all. Any wrong it lies with you to right."

"There is no wrong," said Morris, passionately. "Why do you not comprehend that this wild creature who has gone to his grave went there because he had in him nothing solid or sound enough to save him? Do you think I had no interest in his peace or life? I would have given my own for his till I found that the stuff I thought in him was but foam on the wave. It is workers I seek; not creatures whose will is a thread and whose thoughts are a bubble. He had emotions and passions. He had not one gift that meant conquest of self or of right life. Why should I not turn to the one who possesses all? Who will reward any sacrifice I can make, and who might live to carry out the thought I cannot yet make permanent in any mind? Why do you count me traitor and brute because I will not gloss things, but tell you in honest words my honest thought? I believed you, Ballantyne, a man with more discerning eyes."

His face was calm and serious, his tone no less so, and Ballantyne looked at him in profoundest amazement. What man was this in him that had risen up to arraign his just accusers, and with a faith in himself so certain that it placed them at the bar, and held them dumb before him?

"We can gain nothing by arguing it," Ballantyne said at last. "We look at things from utterly different standpoints. To me loyalty is a prime virtue. To you it seems to bear another name, if I may judge by what I know of your life."

"I am as loyal as you," Morris said, solemnly; "but I am loyal to the ideal, not to the individual. It is truth I seek, and beauty, which is truth. If I believe I have found it and then come to know myself mistaken, shall I dishonor that ideal by cleaving to its corpse till it festers in my arms? I am neither fickle nor disloyal. I seek the highest, — the trinity in which beauty and love and truth are one."

"I cannot deny that you may believe this," Ballantyne said, after a silence in which Morris had looked at him steadily. "But it is an unhappy fact that those who look on use more practical interpretations, and have other definitions of your course. I will not judge you. Your power would always draw me, but your ethics I am incapable of comprehending. You read aloud letters sacredly and only your own. At this very moment, where any and all may turn over the piles, and comment at will, you keep the face of a woman who must have loved you well to give it at all, and you do not hesitate to tell the story. She is my friend, and I regard it as the final touch of obtuseness and disloyalty in a character as complex as a kaleidoscope and as shifting."

"So!" Morris said in surprise, but his eyes did not fall. "That was a youthful blunder; an infat-

uation that slowly took its rightful place. I keep the memory as warning."

"Then let it be memory only," Ballantyne said, sternly; "and for decency's sake destroy what may be yours, but is certainly no other's."

"I see a little how it might strike you," Morris said, as if the admission must necessarily condone all offence.

Ballantyne's eyes rested on him steadily, but Morris did not flinch. Never had he carried himself more nobly, never had Ballantyne felt the extraordinary power he owned, as now in finally rejecting his mission and denying his claim to fellowship.

"My life is before all, and you know it," Morris said in his quietest tone, his eyes dark with emotion. "I hide not one of its acts. I repeat again, I want no concealments."

"Other people are not so fortunately constituted."

"I care not one whit for the usual code. Why should I? Its foundations are false, and its practical action no less so."

"That may be," Ballantyne returned, "but you will fare alone if your path does not change its course."

"It is true, but one has had real knowledge," Morris said, motioning toward Percival, who had left them after the first few words, and now paced up and down waiting for the conversation to end. "There goes one who never doubted, nor could have done if any nature less strong than yours had shown faith-

lessness. Because you are sceptical, must I lose him?"

"Any truth in you commands him still," said Ballantyne, and now he rose. "I am not your enemy, Morris, however distinctly I disbelieve some of your theories as well as some of your practice. There have been many times when I accepted and honored both. You must work out your own problems no less than I mine. Use Percival's eyes, and you may find clearer light than your own always receive."

"But you are taking him from me."

"On the contrary, he refuses to leave you, well as I incline to think it might be for him. Guard his faith more thoroughly than you have that of others, for if you do not, you deserve perdition."

"You are right," Morris answered, quietly. "It is a nature of the gods. He shall not be hurt. And I give you my word that this is the last hour the two photographs have existence. I burn them when I go back. Will that content you?"

He put out his hand, and Ballantyne took it and looked again into the inscrutable eyes of this mystery. Then Morris grew very pale, threw his arms about him, pressed him close, and in a moment was speeding up the hill and past Percival, who turned and came on. Ballantyne, too deeply moved for words, walked silently beside him for a time.

"You are right, Percival," he said at last. "Cleave to him. Mysterious complexity as he is, the good must some day come uppermost. The man of to-

day in him is only a veneer. Underneath he is, as I was told, pagan, Greek, and mediæval monk, and the ill-joined trinity will not dissolve for any will of yours or mine. I could not have believed I should part with him so kindly."

He took out his watch as he spoke, and shook his head. "It must be a train, after all," he said. "There is no time for a five o'clock boat."

"If you prefer boat so decidedly," Percival said, "there are Providence ones, that Morris often goes by. The docks are near, and they do not leave till six."

"A sleeping-car is something I cannot tolerate," Ballantyne said. "A state-room to myself reconciles me to slower methods. There is our car, Percival. We must run a bit if we are not to lose it," and the two made all haste toward the station.

Chapter Eleventh

"BY the way," Percival said, as the car came in sight, "I had quite forgotten this packet which Miss Byers asked me this morning to hand you as you left. Good soul! Thank Heaven she is there, and all her Quaker common sense with her! And now, Ballantyne, best of fellows, all good go with you. Good-bye."

He wrung Ballantyne's hand as he spoke, his clear eyes full of sorrow, then turned and went slowly up the hill.

Ballantyne took his place in the grimy car, the sole passenger, for at that hour the tide of travel sets out, not in, and after a moment untied the little packet, finding within it a heavy envelope addressed to him in Morris's minute but very clear and beautiful hand-writing, and sealed with the lion's-head ring he always wore. For an instant he was moved to tear the thing to shreds, and scatter them in the wind. Instinct told him what lay within, — a confidence from which he recoiled, its nature already a matter of full belief.

"Woman to the end in every method," he said, half aloud, "and I no less so in opening the seal the breaking of which binds me to silence."

For an instant he hesitated, then unfolded the closely written sheets and read:

"There is no doubt in my mind, — there has been none since the first hour of our meeting that you have guessed it; yet why you, when a hundred others in closer relation have never one moment suspected? I saw in your eyes the flash of certainty as you looked across that dinner table noting some betrayal of which I was and am unconscious. Yet I have studied my part. I had need. The man in his natural, involuntary expression from priest to porter I have watched, till I know every movement, voluntary and involuntary. I learned my part, and I have played it successfully.

"Understand that I make no excuses. Why should I? Life was mine to live as I chose. It held a mission, and that mission I knew almost from childhood. It was my right to choose the garb in which it could most easily fulfil itself. Nor did I elect to follow in the steps of George Sand or Rosa Bonheur, the woman always in evidence, always to be recognized. I had work to do that meant the abolition of the woman — the utmost development of all the masculine; that, happily for my plan, had been given me in abundant measure. The foundation for the whole my father laid himself. Dour Presbyterian as he was, he had been trained. No man alive better knew Greek than he, and Plato's Republic forever jostled in his brain the doctrine of election, and the catechism I learned with my Greek grammar.

My mother died in childbed when I was not quite two years old, leaving a man-child, who is as feminine as I am not, and my father, who had loved her, went into retreat, — a desolate house on a desolate moor; not a neighbor, and visited by the carrier once a week.

"There it was that we were brought up, dressed alike and faring alike, though Donald with all his courage was weak as a baby compared to my strength. I was a sturdy animal; but from the beginning I had thoughts of my own, and never feared to tell them. My father knew the world even while seeing it through Presbyterian eyes. There had been a day when he was not Presbyterian, and the old experience did him good service at times. He told me its methods, and I have found no error in his judgment. Well for me that I drank in his teaching as eagerly as he gave it. Well for me that he believed in the physical as well as the spiritual and mental side of life, and studied St. Martin side by side with the catechism. Well for me, yet whether well or ill in the conflict that came, no man can settle, not I myself even, till, it may be, another reincarnation, if such there be, puts me where I justly belong, or gives me better power to endure the mismating of soul and body in this.

"Dressed as a boy from the beginning, side by side with Donald, leading him in all sports, governing him till he had no will but mine, my father's refrain, 'Puir lassie! Only a lassie, after all!' as I grew

older, irritated, outraged, stimulated every power in me. At sixteen he said to me, 'The time has come for return to other ways. I have given you all that the woman-child never gets. We must see now what it may mean. I have been wrong, maybe. It is certain the world would say so, and that the devil had guided my course, and turned you toward perdition. I myself am doubting why I did it.'

"His eyes were heavy. I had heard him walking the floor of nights, but no man dared go near him then. Donald was nearly ready for Aberdeen, his college and mine. He had small brain compared with me, but he is no fool. My father had been watching us both, and it was grief to him that I could not be the boy. I was old always even when a child. I had thoughts, and my will was fixed. 'My life is my own,' I said to him. 'My mind is clear to me. I shall go up with Donald when the time comes, and I shall go as your son. The work I am born to do is not for woman. I will see for myself what my soul means, with no draggle of petticoats or binding of ribbons to stay my course.'

"'You will do what I bid you,' he said. 'There is reason, though, for the tone you take. I myself am responsible for it. I will think again, and in time tell you. There is no haste, after all. You are to remember that you are on the parish register as Jean Pendleton Morris, and your mother is never to be shamed by you.' 'But Jean is a man's name in France,' I said. 'Let me go to France a while, and

then it will be easy for other things to happen.' 'Foolish lass,' he said, but there was a look that meant a thought. 'There is a blunder somehow, but you are too young for more words about it now. Double you are, but double must be undone. God knows if I have done right by you, but I did not mind how the time was passing. It 's your bigness that, somehow, I never saw really till this day. My grandmother was big like you, — five feet ten, — and strong, with a man's strength. It 's all a puzzle.' He went to his room, and locked the door. I knew a battle might come, though, hard as he was, we had never had one. I had always been curious to find out all he knew, to see what he had seen, to question his views. The kirk even, where we went at long intervals, was no trouble to me. I liked the stiff argument that might have made trouble, and bothered none over what it stood for, so that to him I seemed of one mind with him.

"He was in his room all that day eating naught, but at night he came out, and took his supper quietly, with long looks at Donald, who was slim and sloping of shoulder. We read that evening Homer. He loved the roll of the Greek, and I hardly less. I love it to-day, and shall till I die, and after. He turned when he had said good night. 'I give you another year as you will,' he said. 'Beyond that there is no going. Donald is heir and head of the house, and in the order of nature you must presently be ruled by him.'

"I turned my head not to show him I smiled. Not man's law nor the Lord Himself could have made me subject to Donald, and he knew it. 'We are to have a change,' he went on. 'I shall take you where I went in my own youth, — to the Breton coast. They are a hardy folk, and you shall know them as I know them.'

"In a week we were gone; Angus left in charge, a doddering old man that knew naught but how to serve. There we lived out the year, and I learned how to handle a boat and fish with the best of them. I lived with the fisher-folk till I knew every turn and twist of their minds — could even be one of them. And a Breton maid loved me well, and I came to the knowledge of a man's way with a maid, and in pure experiment, meaning no harm, copied the way, and laughed as I saw that I, a maid, had power to bring a blush and a smile that women have not for women. It was there that my father taught me the value of money, — my first lesson. Small use, for it is true in that simple life, but more than I had ever known; and he told me of my mother's little fortune that was mine, and to be handled by me when I was eighteen, — a year between me and the right to do as I would. 'Ah, but to see you at Aberdeen!' he said, and it was like a groan. 'But that will never be.' 'It will be,' I said under my breath; 'but I bide a while. It will come.'

"The year was well over. We had studied with him and with a Breton priest who would fain have

made us Catholic. My father said naught of home. He liked the life, and it kept away thought. And now we began to beg for travel and sight of the world he knew, Donald and me, and he yielded. We went to Rome first, meaning to know all Italy; but he was too eager mulling among the ruins to go farther. And there, when the year was nearly done, he died, in a day as it were, the Roman fever smouldering and working in his blood for weeks, till with one burst of it he was snuffed out. I was eighteen the day they buried him.

"You will see well now why I have told the story of those eighteen years. You feel how life henceforward must have been what I willed it. Donald saw with my eyes. If I chose to go through the course with him so much the better. From that point on, I need trouble you with few more details. I took my degree *cum laude*. I carried everything before me, and when I had taken it I bound Donald by an oath never to reveal that I was a woman, and he took it as easily as he did all I ordered. We had a friend in common, — a man with a huge ambition and a leaning toward Catholicism. Never was statelier head on human shoulders, never a creature that held more power and more gentleness. I loved him first as men love. We were good comrades. In time I loved him as women love, and I, sworn to the life I had chosen, well nigh broke my oath; so near it, that only a hair's-breadth lay between me and revelation. A woman came between, as weak as

he was strong; a woman who played with us all, and presently threw him over for Donald, — poor, weak Donald, who had the most money. The sorrow was that Cameron loved her, but it turned him the way he had half resolved upon long before. Donald married her, and is to-day as blind to her methods as I am clear-seeing. She knows I loathe her, but the reason she does not know. And Cameron is a Franciscan monk to-day in Italy, and has been for many years. That may be another clue to the present.

"Aberdeen was not enough. I saw what England meant. I wanted Oxford, and had it. By this time there was barely a being on earth save Donald who could rise up to say I was a cheat. I did my work. I had my friends. I had large life; more and more life, and, till I met Barbara Ryde, believed most women cheats, — all women weak as water, and as unstable.

"Here comes the thing that has hurt most of all hurts life has brought. She was not, as I soon found, like any woman I had ever met. She had character, directness, power. She loved me from the beginning, and I knew it, and felt myself a wretch, yet gloated over every step of the perilous way. From the world's point of view I was not an impossible match for her. I was in all men's mouths for the work I had done, and they looked for great things to come. I was asked everywhere, and went to get the flavor of this phase of the world's life. I had

some money, and rumor made it more. I had presence, a kind of beauty that women liked, and men also. You do not like the type, but others are not of the same mind. And now you are saying, what devil's masquerading was this? It was no masquerade, I tell you, or so but on one side. I had lived the man's life, — taken the man's point of view. At minutes I wondered if a trace of woman remained in me. To round out the experience, I must know, so far as might be, all subtleties of love. If here I do not understand myself, how shall I make you? It is enough to say that in spite of my own will, my own struggle against the inevitable, I found myself, one evening at Hetherington, telling her I loved her, and in the strange mingling of emotion holding her to my heart and watching her response as another definition in my dictionary of human life. I knew I must presently escape, and here came the pinch. I could not reveal myself, since in that revelation my ambitions must pass, my future fall in ruins before me. A power not my own, a power that has carried me through every emergency, led me through this. She knew my unceasing curiosity as to life. It did not surprise her that I wished to see and study America. I left her thus, naturally, and by slow degrees the correspondence died. That she presently had to think me a scoundrel has been the bad side of it. Save for my work, I would have told her the truth. In all save this one thing my life is an open book. I have done what came to me as good to do.

I have been hope and strength and stimulus to many minds, a million times beyond the power of woman. It is difficult always to recollect that I am one. The *rôle* so strenuously learned is part of my very blood. I am not the fraud you believe. I am honest, and have always wished to be so. The world is for man. As woman, I should utterly have lost its savor, its richness, the sense of conquest and ownership that thrills me as I go. I do not comprehend myself. It is or may be the woman in me that compels miraculous friendships, fuller in power and charm than most of that that men call loving. They round out and fulfil my conception of living. If they ever fail me, there are always other resources; but they will not. I know my people and they know me, and the shifting as it seems to you is the play of the kaleidoscope, more permanent than you think, since, whatever the combination, the essential pieces are always the same.

"I shall keep, then, my little colony, though the principals in it may change, as change they have more than once. I shall live my life. For its ending I do not concern myself greatly. I have had premonitions of what it may be. When they are clearer you will hear of me again as gone to Italy, and in that Franciscan convent Cameron will receive my last confession, and, if need arise, placate the outraged monks. In the meantime I have no fear of indiscreet revelation on your part. I would have kept you for the work if Fate had not willed otherwise,

for it is the one true seed of true life for this paradoxical country. Why your eyes have been unsealed remains a problem to me, but one I need not seek to solve. Later, you will perhaps come to comprehension of me and my life. That you cannot to-day does not surprise, and there I leave it."

All perception of the life about him had been lost as Ballantyne read with an absorption as utter as if this were the first hint of the strange life whose orbit must here and there, in the future, still touch his own. He roused at last to consciousness of things about him as the conductor faced him inquiringly and he saw the empty car, and its passengers making their way toward the waiting ferry-boat. He folded the sheets hastily and thrust them into an inner pocket, then withdrew them as hastily, for his hand had touched a letter written the night before that could have no place side by side with this record of a double life. That life he would judge no longer. Its mystery, its extraordinary involvements, the results that still might come, were no longer part of his responsibility; and as he leaned over the side of the railing he took the confession from his pocket, tore it into minutest fragments, and watched them floating on the outgoing tide with a sense that that passage was over. His own letter he still held thoughtfully, then, as the shore was reached, crossed to the nearest mail-box and dropped it in, his eyes lighting suddenly as the lid closed upon it.

"That settles my side of the problem," he said

half aloud, and turned down West Street and toward the dock, where the boat lay. Miss Ryde's weekly letter, received a day or so before, had held a paragraph which had made him long to take instant passage for England, and he had read it over and over.

"Perhaps," it had ended, "I have no right to speak, but it seems to me the time is nearing when you may and must. As I watch Marion, it becomes plainer to me daily that she has less and less interest in the England she had determined to adopt, and more and more drawing toward the country she forsook. She has had a sheaf of strange experiences here, which she must tell you herself. For the rest, I am certain that if you write, it will clarify the whole turbid, perplexed state of things, and give her the power to decide what she needs; but as to that, you are final judge, and you only."

"So be it," said Ballantyne, baring his head for the moment, as his eyes looked far beyond the swarm of people all about; then, with the look of one who knows that good is near, passed on toward the propeller.

Chapter Twelfth

MISS RYDE had taken her place behind the tall coffee urn of her breakfast table, and looked impatiently toward the open windows through which the light wind of early September blew softly, bringing with it the scent of ingathering harvests and that fainter one of earthiness that carries in it the threat of falling leaf and fading flower, and naked tossing branches, " bare ruined choirs, where once the sweet birds sang."

To-day such hour seemed far remote. Green and silent stretches of turf swept far under long vistas of shadowing trees. On the gray front of the old house the sunshine fell warm, as it had fallen on generation after generation of dead and gone Hetheringtons, and in the ancient garden at the side, with clipped fanciful forms of box and sweet old flowers whose names the modern gardener knoweth not, walked a pair at whose figures Barbara Ryde looked with a sniff of scorn.

" The men are mad, quite mad," she said. " Jane, go and say to Miss Lacy and Mr. Beresford that I am here and waiting."

Jane, the inflexible, had properly no place in the breakfast-room, but her tacitly conceded rights included the privilege of oversight of the teakettle, and a short space in which she waged silent and determined war with the butler, who resented with never-assuaged fury her claim to the post-bag, swelling like a turkey cock as he handed it to her, and retreating for what might be called a suppressed but no less furious gobble of protest in his own private quarters.

Miss Ryde smiled grimly as she watched the familiar pantomime, and having received the bag, which she unlocked herself, repeated her order, in the mean time going over the pile of letters, rising to distribute them to the various places with a running comment as she went.

"Beresford, two duns and seven invitations. Norris, five from the maddest of his Social Democratic Federation lunatics — I know by the extraordinary writing; and the rest his general series of adorers and inviters in all directions. Eleanor, much the same. Marion, ha!"

Miss Ryde paused, and a look of surprise replaced by one of satisfaction was on her face.

"So! John has come to his senses at last!" she said. "He should have done this or he could have done it months ago. It is well perhaps as it is. From the thickness he appears to have made up for lost time. Ha, Beresford! Will you never learn that water being put over fire at a fixed time, in a fixed way, boils at a fixed minute, and that you who

must have tea after your own theory, must also conform to law if you would drink it after those of your own making?"

Mr. Beresford paused in the window, and rumpled again the fiery hair which seemed to have just emerged from a similar process, eying her at the same time with a certain subdued defiance, but he spoke no word.

"Where is Marion?" Miss Ryde asked after a moment in which she smiled wickedly.

"At the bottom of the garden, madam, under the eglantine, and just turning to come in."

"Where you drove her with another proposal, Beresford. How many does this make?"

"Six," returned Beresford, undaunted. "I shall make it in the end."

"Idiot!" said Miss Ryde, in her most composed tone. "Lunatic, fool, and blind! Can you not see she has other thoughts in that head of hers?"

"Perfectly, madam, but that does not exclude a few more. I propose to leave with her clear and absolute understanding that if she finds it agreeable to play football with the heart of Beresford, it is entirely at her disposition. I do not as yet seem to have made this perfectly clear, but I do not despair."

"Football!" returned Miss Ryde suddenly, pink with indignation. "Will you never understand that whether the thing of rubber you call a heart is in you or not, makes no atom of difference to her?"

"The thing of rubber has at least one good point, madam. What it encircles, it holds firm."

"Yes, till something subtler has done its work, and the band snaps when most needed. Your simile was ill-chosen, Beresford. I have gone back to ribbons for my letters and so renounced one more modern inadequacy. So, Marion, you are there at last?"

Marion came lightly in, met by one of Beresford's most sweeping bows.

"'My lady comes at last,'" he said. "There sits Radamanthia, and the water boils."

"It sounds like immediate execution. Indeed, we are too bad to have kept you waiting so," Marion said, smiling softly as she met Miss Ryde's contented look, a look that always came when it fell upon her. She kissed her as she spoke, and Miss Ryde shook her head in a perfunctory way as if to emphasize a general theory as to follies of that nature, and Marion passed to her place, a sudden rising and ebbing of color being the only token of surprise as she looked at the superscription on her letter.

Beresford had eyed it with keen interest and watched her jealously, piling her plate with cold meats from the sideboard, and more and more urgent as he saw what slight interest breakfast had for her. She answered him as usual, the mixture of persiflage and seriousness that constituted their daily intercourse; but there was a look in the little man's eyes as she finally rose that brought sudden compunction to the keen ones that rested on him.

"It is dead earnest," Miss Ryde thought. "Poor Beresford! Well, I am not certain he does not deserve it, but it is hard none the less."

"Come here by me," she said, abruptly. "Beresford, did you know Lord Auberon had proposed to Marion?"

"D—n him," Beresford said, under his breath.

"I should be perfectly reconciled to such a conclusion," Miss Ryde said, calmly, "if it were Benners or Marston or the other one that made his bid for her money. She has even more now, for some old Quaker who died the other day left her all he had, in addition to the comfortable sum she owns already. But Lord Auberon is another matter. He has more than a suspicion of a soul. He thinks and feels, and would worship her. She grows move lovely every day."

"I know it," Beresford said, with a groan. "I have eyes if I am forty-eight, and I find a sensitive spot still in the thing of rubber."

Miss Ryde put out her hand, and her friendliest look was upon him.

"Don't you see," she said, "that the enchantment is over? Marion is as American to-day as John Ballantyne. That is what the year has done for her, and I am glad of it."

"It is entirely your fault," Beresford said, in sudden wrath. "You have riddled everything with that tongue of yours, till nothing remained sacred or honorable or worthy any more. Yet one year

ago she was to all intents and purposes an Englishwoman."

"And more shame to her if I do say it," returned Miss Ryde. "But then no less shame to me and to you, and all fools who would have had it last. To tickle our fancy and her own, is she to renounce her birthright, and have no sense of what father land and mother country mean? She wanted the permanent, the unshifting, Heaven help her! There is but one permanent and unshifting, and its home is under skies neither your eyes nor mine are to see yet, Beresford."

"Then she is going back? You don't mean — Is it Ballantyne?"

"Yes, it is Ballantyne," Miss Ryde said. "And now, Ashton Beresford, hold your tongue and go your way in peace." And with sudden remorse at her own unguarded speech she turned abruptly from him and left the room.

Marion in the meantime had left the house and was making her way to a deep retreat far down the wood, where a group of mighty beeches swept the ground with their branches and made a retreat secure and inviolable. In the curving hollow of one a back had been constructed, forming a seat with ample space for two. Here she sat down and for a moment looked silently at the letter in her hand. Then with passionate tenderness she pressed it to eyes and lips, and slowly opening it touched the pages softly as if for caress, and read:

"I had said to myself, my Marion, for my Marion you are forever, no matter what will of yours may still lie between, that no word should go from me to you till I stood again in your presence and could know what the year had wrought or left unaccomplished. But the sudden pressure of events, that shall have no room here, has made me turn to you to-night with inexpressible longing, and I write and must write some things that will not wait for speech. With you before me, I should be blind and deaf to anything but the one demand. I want the details, the few that need words, disposed of beforehand. Till now I have held to my agreement. You will forgive me if a few days before the year ends I reach across this space that lies between.

"Do you think that I have found this time of wandering up and down, seeking to understand this life that drew me here, an easy one? Not a day but has held its moments, more often its hours, when my pledge to you has seemed simple madness; when one touch of your hand, one look into your eyes, would have meant all that life can ever hold of happiness.

"Now before I try to tell you what these months have meant, you must know that I have no argument for my own hope and desire, that you may not use with equal force for your own. I realize this so fully that I hold myself ready for any compromise that will best meet your own need and wish. Where you are is my country, my home, yet you know and I know how deep is the faith that brought me here,

and how I long to have your thought toward it as mine. And now let me write, as I can, what, as the year ends, I find to be its summary.

"I shall not seek to give here in detail the strange impressions of those first months at home. You know, through the letters to Miss Ryde, that I travelled constantly, and in many States, with fullest access to every phase of life, from the factory hand or the hod-carrier up to the millionaire. For months I have to confess that the situation seemed to me infinitely worse than anything in England, because here a great thought seemed hopelessly overlaid by aims that meant only the pursuit of the merely material advantage.

"In England, where the same sordidness and encompassing power of the mercantile spirit is often one's despair, is the more and more certain fact of an enormous movement toward liberty and higher aims. For such aims I seemed here to search in vain. Here and there an individual stood for simple sincerity of thought and life, but below all was the unending chink of the dollar; and in what is called society, that setting apart of the few from the many, Anglomania ruled, and reversion to a dying type seemed the dearest wish of those who had forgotten, or even never known, the meaning of the inheritance they failed to claim.

"This was the first series of impressions, and profound melancholy settled upon me. With less direct knowledge, perhaps, I saw that your woman's intuition

had given you this phase in full, and knew why you had left it behind you, and sought in the older home the substance instead of the shadow. But gradually, from the crude mass of unassorted impressions, other forms arose, undefined still, but with promise in their outline. But I doubted much if the life an American citizen should naturally live could be lived either in the mart or in the midst of the indifference and dead level of mediocrity, which seems one result of the present form of education.

"It was at this point that I went to the little community, details of which, for many reasons, I have never given. It had seemed to demonstrate itself that the individual in whom faith remained must isolate himself and live his life apart from the mass, since a machine controlled politics, and for thinker, artist, or author retreat was the sole resource in a society that cared only nominally for their doings.

"Such conclusion had come to the head of the community, a man of singular power in many directions, who sought to bring about him a group of like mind, and who had a species of monastery in the country, yet near enough to keep in touch with the best in New York. Here all relations of the citizen to the State were to be lived out, and the ideal made the substance of daily thought and work.

"For a time, sceptically as I watched it all, it even seemed to me that in life of this nature might be the solution for all. Then as fuller knowledge came, its deep and utter selfishness grew more and more

apparent. So far from making loyalty more possible, it rendered disloyalty inevitable. From every common need and want was entire separation. Family life had no place. Contempt, criticism, cold aloofness, hedged us about. With this I saw also much of society, and now and then had glimpses of better life underlying it and plain in faces that I encountered here and there.

" It became certain that this man Morris had failed to grasp the meaning that still remained, and his summary of every struggle since the War of Independence as a mere fight for easiest methods of filling the treasury came to be to me mere froth and dogmatism. With all the good that went with his scheme went always a fatal ignoring of any but the individual right. The many were mere *canaille*, and went to their own place. The 'Brotherhood of the Heights' had no place for those who must dwell in the valley, and against such separation I revolted more and more. It was the daily observation of a selfish absorption, often unconscious, but pervading the entire scheme, that brought me by degrees to see the possibilities of natural living among men; and when this was plain again, though its methods were still filled with difficulties, I left them for a time, and at my cousin's old home found an American so ardent, so simple and sincere, that suddenly I saw that under the Philistine garb that this century of material effort has woven and ordained for most, the same heart might often beat.

"In him, in his sons, in those who came and went with him, I saw that if money sometimes meant much, honor and loyalty meant more, and that in the mass I had doubted or scorned or feared lay dormant a faith and an abounding energy, that in any crisis would unite as one and meet the call for sacrifice, for death if needed. You and I alike have called it crude, shifting, uncertain, ignoble. You and I have felt together that the Republic, save as a name, had nearly ceased to exist, and lay prone under the wheels of the enormous Juggernaut, the political machine, in which the Irishman, incapable of rule at home, finds with surprised delight a kingdom where his reckless, conscienceless impulses are allowed fullest play. He dominates the cities. He does not dominate the people as a whole.

"Our healing lies yet in shadow, but it is near. Neither in democracy nor in aristocracy can it be found, but in the conscience and heart of thousands who watch the voice will speak, and a wider, wiser humanity begin. What we want, — but here are words that speak more clearly than mine the need and the outcome; words of an American noblest of all, for they are Lowell's:

"'What we want is an active class, who will insist, in season and out of season, that we shall have a country whose greatness is measured not only by its square miles, its number of yards woven, of hogs packed, of bushels of wheat raised; not only by its skill to feed and clothe the body, but also by its

power to feed and clothe the soul; a country which shall be as great morally as it is materially; a country whose very name shall not only, as it now does, stir us as with the sound of a trumpet, but shall call out all that is best within us, by offering us the radiant image as something better and nobler and more enduring than we; of something that shall fulfil our own thwarted aspirations, when we are but a handful of forgotten dust in the soil trodden by a race whom we shall have helped to make more worthy of their inheritance than we ourselves had the power, I might almost say the means, to be.'

"My Marion, it is this life I would live. It is this life I would have you love and share. Come back with me to your own, dearest child of a race whose love for country never slackened, and whose faith is no less living in you whose despair has been the noble despair of a noble soul. Feel it still you may, perhaps must, but in moments only. The hope of the nations, the hope of every waiting soul, is here. I am coming for you. You will return with me, and here in the old home, in that noblest city that noblest feet have trod, whose air, no matter what earthy damps and mists may rise, still throbs with great thoughts and glorious acts, there we shall live and work, secure in the faith that the foundations laid by steady hands and minds that could not falter endure and must endure forever. Come home with me, my Marion, and in coming know that the older home is also ours, and that both are our inheritance."

Marion read the closely written sheets once, twice, then folded them gently, and, still holding them in her hand, sat motionless and lost in thought, with unseeing eyes fixed on the fair English landscape before her. Doubt had vanished. Perplexities had ended. "I have been a prig — a prig of the most detestable order," she said at last, rising from her seat, a new look on her face. "That alone is answer sufficient, for it sums up my year. I had to find it out, though, and he will understand."

Chapter Thirteenth

THE light blue haze that had rested over the marshes as Ballantyne had looked his last toward them deepened as they went, and when the hour of starting found him on board the Providence boat a gathering fog rested on harbor and shipping, and made their way out to the East River a slow and uncertain passage. Once past Hell Gate, however, and in the open sound, the channel was clear; and though the whistle sounded at regular intervals, the fog did not thicken, and their way seemed unobstructed.

As he went on board the voice of a child had called out suddenly: "Papa! papa! Oh, mamma! Papa is coming!" and he looked up to see the faces of two boys, of five and six, or seven perhaps, who waved their hands and cried again as they met his eyes:

"Mamma, it is papa."

Some one drew them away, looking over for a moment, with a little flush and smile, a delicate high-bred face, and when he went out to the upper deck he found them still there, and the oldest boy ran to him.

"What makes you look so like our papa?" he said. "You are not, I can see now, but I did n't see at first."

"Come here, Philip," the mother said; but Ballantyne's arm was around him as he heard the name, and the child moved closer with a look toward the mother that begged permission to stay.

"Let me have him for a while, if you will," Ballantyne said, for name and age both recalled the little brother bound up with every memory of his childhood. The mother smiled assent, and the shyer child who had lingered by her presently joined them. The night was warm and close, and Ballantyne, who had brought a small basket of choice peaches, preferred them to supper in the stifling cabin below, and shared them with the children, whose delicate, beautiful faces were like the mother's, and who had soon told him why they were there. Papa was sick, very sick, the oldest said, and in Providence, where he had stayed at home while they went to Long Island, and now they were going to him, because he could not get well without his two boys.

"We shall take care of him," Philip said, proudly. "I love him so much he 'll have to get well, you know. Mamma says love cures everything in the world."

"Mamma is right," Ballantyne answered.

"Of course," the child went on. "Mamma is always right. When I get angry with little John —"

"Philip and John!" Ballantyne repeated, and he looked at them with sudden apprehension, unaccountable to himself.

"Little John, but not Johnny," the child went on. "Mamma wants all our whole name because she likes them. Do you like them?"

"Very much, for one is my own name, and the other was my own little brother's long ago."

"Tell me about him," Philip urged. "Where is he? Is he big and tall like you?"

"He must be, Philip, for he is almost as old as I. He went to heaven a great while ago, when he was only as old as you," Ballantyne answered, the earnest face and dark eyes of the child seeming almost Philip's own. The mother came presently to take them to bed, and they threw their arms about his neck and hugged him close.

"I love you, I love you," the small lips said. "Will you be here in the morning? Good night, good night."

Ballantyne's eyes followed them. His love for children was instinctive.

"No wonder the father pines for them," he thought; and then as there came before him the vision of what might be, a vision which as it sometimes rose he had shut resolutely away, he gave it full dominion. For him, too, might be the arms of clinging children and kisses quite his own, to make him glad. The fog had lifted. Behind them the wake lay white and glistening, and the sky was clear above.

"The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice
I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veiled Death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee."

The words seemed to come of themselves. He spoke them half aloud, and started at the sound.

"It is life, more life, not death, that I want," he said, low. "It is the shadow of poor Regnault's fate that is on me to-night, and that will hardly pass till I see Marion again." And he went to his state-room to forget in sleep all that the day had brought.

How long he slept he could not tell. He woke suddenly from the dream that in childhood had come so often, the memory of the shipwreck, and the long night in which they huddled together on the deck, till in the gray twilight of early morning, the shore rising dim beyond, the gray old sailor who had held his post at their side said to them, "It 's time. This is the best chance." Then his father's face had suddenly shown itself, pale and set but very quiet, as when he bound the younger to his shoulders and held John in his arm ready for that leap to the black water below. "Hold fast, my little Philip. Keep your head up all the time, and father will bring you to shore. Be brave, my little John, and don't struggle. Father will hold you safe." Then came the plunge; the long, long sinking and uprising; the leaping waves, the struggle, and a crash and cry as something ground and tore and splintered, and threw him to the floor.

He staggered up, the horror of the dream still upon him; but a moment sufficed to collect himself, to grope hastily for clothing, and feel his way through the saloon to the deck, where in the dimness of earliest morning he saw what destruction had been wrought. The iron-clad prow of a powerful propeller had cut its way, in the collision, almost to the centre of their boat, which was already settling lower and lower. Then came the mad panic of creatures in whom only terror remained alive. The few boats lowered by the sailors sank to the thwarts as men flung themselves down, or fell back sullenly as the captain raged at them, demanding place for the women and children. Ballantyne looked for a moment, then turned suddenly. The mother with her two boys was not there; and he made his way down again and toward the state-room, whose neighborhood to his own he had noted the night before. A gleam of light came from within, and as he knocked and called, the door opened, and the mother's face, pale and quiet, showed itself.

"Do not frighten them," she said. "I had a candle. I have dressed them partly, and am ready now. I have told them we shall go ashore, God knows how," she added, "but you will help us."

"There is no time to lose," he said, taking the younger in his arms; and together they made their way to the deck. Here Ballantyne's swift hands bound together three or four chairs, and now he fastened a life preserver securely about the mother, lashed

her in turn to the frail raft, and bound the younger child in her arms with a light shawl knotted fast.

"Have courage," he said, "the shore is not far away, and something will soon pick you up. I shall be near with Philip, and we shall all of us soon be there, and safe."

Even as he spoke he knew the last moments of safety were past, and with one final charge, "Hold fast and do not be afraid," had let them go. Then something rushed by him as he rose again, and a figure that had sunk in a heap on the deck, groaning and praying abjectly, followed with a leap, clutching wildly as he came to the surface at the chance of life.

Ballantyne had leaped, guarding against the danger of rising under the vessel, and now, an easy and powerful swimmer, made his way hampered by the child he had fastened securely as might be to his back. To reach the frail raft that held the mother, and to beat off the creature who tried to climb to it, and clutched at last with a shriek at a plank that floated near, was the first task and one at which he sickened. In the swirl and suck of the sinking ship lay the next danger, but the wind had already shifted and blew steadily toward the shore, a faint gray line barely a mile away.

"I shall make for that shore," Ballantyne said. "There are boats there, and you will soon be safe. Philip isn't afraid. He knows we shall get there."

"I 'm not afraid because mamma is n't," little John

said, opening the eyes he had shut tight in terror, and smiling at Philip, who clung silently and said no word.

"You are sure you have strength?" the mother said. "Is n't it better to hold to this?"

"I shall till the last of it is over," Ballantyne replied. "It is coming now."

He closed his eyes as he spoke, for a shriek had gone up from the few who had refused to leap, and who made a mad rush forward as the ship slowly settled, till with a sudden convulsive quiver she plunged, and for a long moment only the whirl of waves was above her. Then to the surface came struggling heads and arms, fragments of plank, or floating cabin furniture, and one poor dog who howled mournfully as he swam. Here and there one caught at something floating near and came to presence of mind. Here and there drowning wretches clutched each other and went down battling together, and through it all Ballantyne saw only the wide, terror-stricken eyes of the child, who looked in horror toward them. Then there was silence, and in the sick giddiness that came upon him he knew only that he must reach the shore and find means of rescue for those that remained.

"I should not leave you if I were not sure it would mean swifter help," he said. "You understand?"

"God bless you," the mother said, softly; and he struck out toward the shore, breasting the sullen waves and making steady headway toward the flash-

ing light on the long point he sought to reach. To the day of his death Ballantyne will remember that slow passage toward life; the sweep of waves as the wind rushed about him, the long gasp and clutch of the brave little soul who gave no other token of fear, and his own terror as now and then the little head fell and he cried to him, "Hold up your head, Philip! we are almost there. The water shall not hurt you."

His own strength was less than he had thought. The strokes had less power. There seemed some undercurrent that bore him back, and he paused with sudden doubt. The shore was near. As he trod water for a moment he saw the low line of rocks, and on the point a man who waved his arms and shouted encouragingly. He pushed on nearer and nearer, till at last with one supreme effort he flung himself forward, conscious only of sudden sharp pain, and the feeling of hands that held and pulled him in.

"The child; see to the child," he gasped, and then came blackness into which he fell and knew no more.

. . . . . .

Ballantyne opened his eyes at last with determined effort. The sound of the waves was in his ears, but warmth and cessation of struggle had come.

"The child; see to the child," he said, for a weight seemed still about his neck, and he moved uneasily and tried to lift his head, held down by something.

"Those were his last conscious words," a voice

said; and another deeper one replied with a ring of joy, "He is safe, madam; he is back at the point where consciousness ended, and goes on from there."

Ballantyne's lids had fallen again. They were heavy and required deliberate action, but they obeyed, and he looked full into the face of the child who stood near him, wide-eyed and solemn, yet with a dawning smile.

"Little Philip?" he said slowly, and tried once more to look about. "Then we are in heaven."

He stopped, bewildered. "Why do you come as a child?" he said. "They grow here."

"I am Philip: don't you know? You brought me to shore," the child said, and flung his arms about him and kissed him with warm lips that held life.

It was plain again. Life and not death was there; and now Ballantyne looked about him, strangely weak but remembering, and met the keen eyes of a gray-headed man who looked at him reassuringly, and the delicate face, pale still, but with deepest happiness in the gaze, of the mother he had left waiting for the help he sought.

"Thank God, you are quite yourself," she said, with her hand for a moment on his. "Now you will soon be well."

"Well?" he repeated vaguely; and now he put up his hand to his head, finding bandages about it.

"A small fracture, but a pretty serious one," the gray-headed man said. "I am the doctor, Dr. Gershom. We managed to get you here, but it has been

a bit doubtful how you were coming out. No doubt now. You 'll be on your feet in a few days."

"Here? What is here?"

"Providence. You are in John Bartram's house. This girl you saved for us is my daughter Lucy. These boys are my grandchildren. We owe you several lives, but you will be content to come into full possession of one."

"You must get me on my feet at once," Ballantyne said, decisively, trying to rise and finding it impossible. "I sail on Saturday."

"You may sail when you will when you are stronger. Now there is a little waiting to be done."

"But, doctor, I must go, if I have to be carried on board. The day was fixed. I cannot break it."

A door had opened in the next room. There was a moment's delay, and then Mrs. LeBaron came swiftly in and bent over him, tears in her eyes, but with smiling lips.

"Dear, dear John," she said. "You have lain here almost ten days. Your ship went without you."

For a moment Ballantyne closed his eyes, and turned away his face. Then he opened them with eager entreaty.

"Cable," he said, low. "You know what to say. Cable that I was ill and could not come, but shall."

"I have," Mrs. LeBaron said; "and I have written. They understand. Now sleep, and when you wake I will talk as much as you like."

She laid her firm, cool hand on his eyes, and quiet passed from it into every nerve. He swallowed mechanically something put between his lips, and reaching to the hand, held it close and fell asleep.

When he awoke the sun was shining and he was alone, with memory clear and full, and every sense alert and vigorous. He could move now, for the curious torpor had passed away, and he looked about the room, seeing a figure in the deep window, which turned and showed Mrs. LeBaron's face.

"You are quite back again?" she said, as she came to him and bent over him. "A very different night from those that have gone before. You slept like an angel, and now when you are redd up a little you shall have breakfast, — a real breakfast, and not the condensed substitutes Dr. Gershom has been pouring down."

Her eyes were full of gladness as she busied herself about him, — a look he had never seen on her face. The children came in when the tray had been taken away, and he sat up, gaunt and haggard still, but quite alive, and held Philip close as he climbed on the bed and crept into his arms, the shadow of terror still showing in his dark eyes.

"I dreamed about it," he whispered; "but mamma told me I should n't much more. She said she knew, even when the biggest waves came, that we should get to shore, and then the boat went out and got her and John, — the boat from the lighthouse, you know.

But I could n't speak to them either for a little while, because I was all full of waves, you know. I did hold up my head all the way, 'cept just a little."

"Brave little soul!" Ballantyne said, with a sudden strange thrill as if another presence were there.

"It is the end of any doom my poor mother believed must come," he thought. "Whatever spell her mind wove for itself or for me is broken. Life, and not death, has come out of the sea."

"Papa is getting well. He can walk across the room. He will come to see you when he can go a little farther. I have got to go now and tell him how you are. I said I would;" and Philip slid down and tiptoed from the room.

"Tell me how you knew," Ballantyne said, as Mrs. LeBaron sat down by him.

"From the pocket-book you had fastened inside the loose undervest. A note from me was in it, and it happened that Dr. Gershom and I were old acquaintances. He wrote me, and I came at once. The fracture was slight. You got it as you threw yourself forward in that last tremendous effort. The lighthouse keeper said he thought your skull had gone like an eggshell, and you lay in such death-like senselessness, there was hardly a token of life till Dr. Gershom got here. The collision was only a few miles from Providence, and the only way seemed to get you there. An ambulance came out and brought you here, and here you have come to yourself just

where these worshipping people would have you. And now, John, I have something for you. It is a cable dispatch. Can you read it?"

A deep flush came into Ballantyne's pale face. He put out his hand, and as Mrs. LeBaron went toward the window, his still uncertain fingers unfolded the yellow strip, and he read under the date, "Friday, September nineteenth. Sail on the twentieth by the 'Baltic' with Marion. Barbara Ryde."

"Did you beg her to do this?" he said, with sudden fire. "I will not have her back on those terms. She shall not come because mere pity brings her."

"Oh, foolish John; true to your sex," Mrs. LeBaron said, as she met his wrathful eyes. "I did not beg. I believe I had no need to beg. I wrote but a page, and I said in it only that you could not sail at the appointed time, because you had nearly lost your life saving others."

"But that was tacit appeal," he said. "I wish I might have gone to them, though — it is possible — it can't be possible!"

He stopped short a moment, and his eyes searched her face.

"I had written," he said. "I wrote all that paper would hold of what I meant to say. Perhaps it is that she answers in this way. But how shall one know? Does any one here know?"

"No one but you and me."

He was silent, and turned away his head as if to

sleep, and Mrs. LeBaron retreated with a smile he did not see.

"Doubt as you like, poor boy," she said to herself. "I think I have blundered in telling you too soon, but the issues no man need question."

For the days that followed a resolute silence lay between them. Ballantyne gained hourly, but a great restlessness was upon him, and he watched every token of cloud or wind with anxiety illy veiled. But the days went on toward the equinoctial, each sunny and warm as if no storm were near, and at last came one in which he read that the "Baltic" had passed Fire Island, and waited in the same silence for what further was to come.

Through a night of sleeplessness and tossing he heard the wind howl and the heavy rain beat against the windows, and when he had dressed, weak still, but quite himself, and pushed away the breakfast that would not be eaten, he took a book and tried to read.

Through the falling rain came presently the sound of wheels. A carriage had stopped. There were voices, and a delay that seemed an eternity. Then the door opened, and he turned toward it a face ashy pale, and Marion was there. For a moment she stood silent. Then, pale as he, she came forward and bent toward him, and her eyes were full of something at which pulses leaped and every nerve answered her. But as his arms stretched and would hold her they dropped.

"I will not have it for pity," he said. "If that is all, you must go back to your own."

"But how, when I come for love?" she said; but his eyes even then searched hers silently.

"I will never go back," she said, "because this is my own place, and I want life here. O John! don't you see that I believe it?"

For a moment his eyes were on her with a question that shook him as he looked. Then he drew her to him, and as his lips met hers, knew at last that whatever doubt or perplexity life must still hold, such solving as man may know would be together.

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